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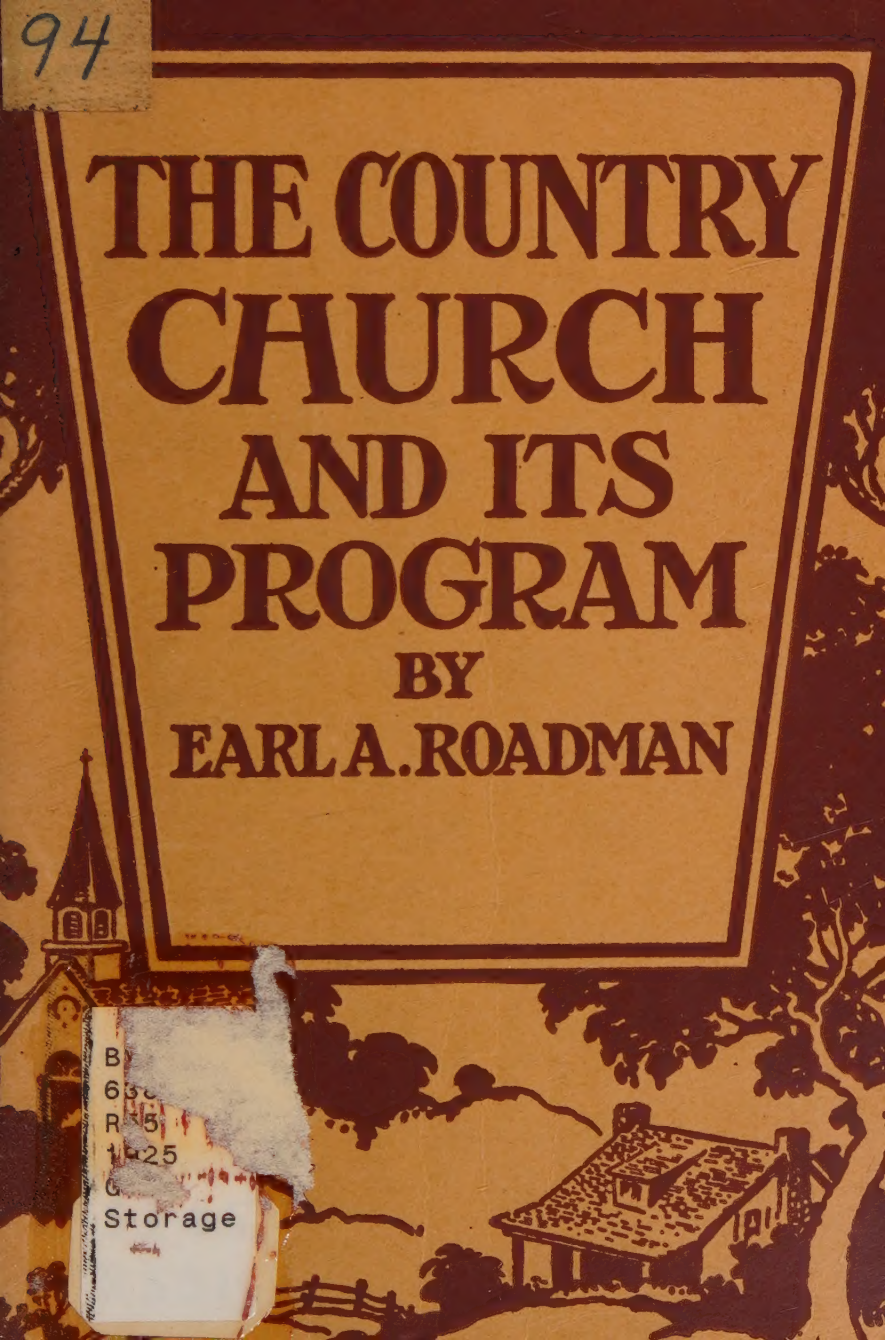
THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND ITS PROGRAM

BY

EARL A. ROADMAN



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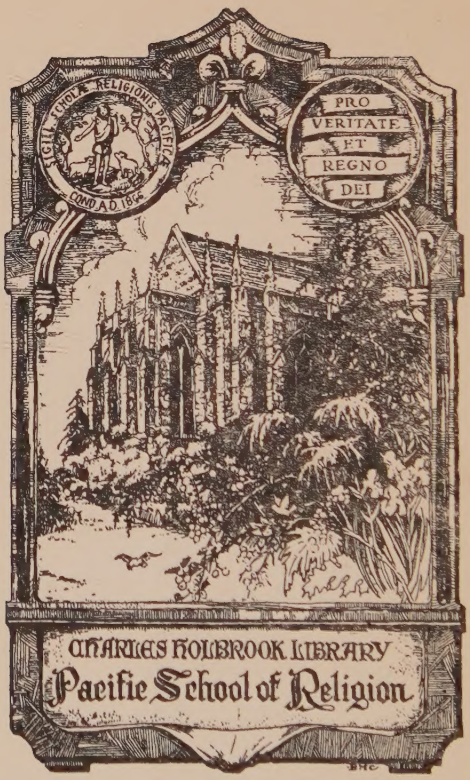

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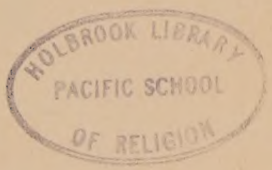

RURAL LIFE SERIES

A Christian in the Countryside
The Country Church and Its Program
The Christian and Rural Institutions (In Preparation)

RURAL LIFE SERIES

HENRY H. MEYER, Editor
WADE CRAWFORD BARCLAY, Associate Editor

The Country Church and Its Program

By
EARL A. ROADMAN

Approved by the Committee on Curriculum
of the Board of Sunday Schools of
the Methodist Episcopal Church

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PREFACE

THE country church is challenged to a new life and renewed effort by the conditions of the new day which is upon us. The following pages seek to outline a few of the points of view and some of the methods whereby the religion of country life may be enhanced and the service of the church made more effective.

I desire gratefully to acknowledge helpful criticism and suggestion from the Rev. Roy L. Smith, D.D., pastor of Simpson Methodist Church, Minneapolis, who read the manuscript with painstaking diligence; Miss Wynona Farquhar and Professor C. B. Swaney, of the Upper Iowa University faculty; the Rev. Ralph Hall Collis, president of the Upper Iowa Conference Rural Life Society; the Rev. A. B. Curran, D.D., for three years director of my work upon the Dubuque District of the Upper Iowa Conference; the Rev. Will Kirwin, D.D., present district superintendent of the Dubuque District; the Rev. A. W. Henke, the Rev. Clyde E. Baker, and the Rev. J. B. Ackman, esteemed brethren in the ministry.

EARL A. ROADMAN.

March, 1925.
Fayette, Iowa.

INTRODUCTION

The Country Church and Its Program is one of a series of brief, elective study courses for adult classes in rural Sunday schools. Titles in this series—The Rural Life Series—are listed on a preceding page. The suggestion is made that the textbooks shall be studied by classes in the order of titles in this list.

The theory that has given rise to this series of elective study courses is that the country church, as one of the most important of the religious and social institutions of our nation, has problems that are peculiar to itself. If it is to survive permanently and fulfill its mission these problems must be studied, and solutions sought and found, by the men and women who constitute the church. It is not enough for the pastor to be aware of these problems, study them and preach about them. The men and women who in themselves *are* the church must be thoroughly cognizant of them. It is not sufficient for the congregation to hear of them by the hearing of the ear. They must do more than hear. They must hear about them, read about them, think about them, discuss them, and accomplish their solution. The agency for this undertaking is ready at hand in the adult class.

The use of such a series of study courses involves for most adult classes a marked change of procedure. These courses are intended for use at the Sunday-school hour, for the time being taking the place of the Uniform Lessons. An objection may be anticipated from some on the ground that these special courses are not Bible study courses. A thorough, impartial examination of the material will effectively answer this objection, for these courses are in a very real and vital sense Bible study. They involve the application of Christian ideals and principles, derived from the Scriptures, to present-day problems of living in rural communities. They bring the Bible out of the past into the present and seek to make its teachings live in to-day's life.

They seek to reproduce in the men and women of our rural communities the type of religious experience which resulted in the early Christian Church giving to the world personalities of power—men and women who revealed by their everyday lives that they had been with Jesus and learned of him—together with those new social ideals which remade civilization. These courses are not intended to displace the Bible from the adult class. They are intended to bring about a new and more effective kind of Bible study.

It is hoped also that these courses will find other and wider uses. Wherever groups of men and women gather for the consideration of problems involved in the betterment of life in village and countryside they will, we believe, be found serviceable.

THE EDITORS.

And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Genesis 1. 27, 28.)

But now I will not be unto the remnant of this people as in the former days, saith Jehovah of hosts. For *there shall be* the seed of peace; the vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things. (Zechariah 8. 11, 12.)

Sing unto Jehovah with thanksgiving;
Sing praises upon the harp unto our God,
Who covereth the heavens with clouds,
Who prepareth rain for the earth,
Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.
He giveth to the beast his food,
And to the young ravens which cry.
. . . . . .
He maketh peace in thy borders;
He filleth thee with the finest of the wheat,
He sendeth out his commandment upon earth;
His word runneth very swiftly.
. . . . . .
He hath not dealt so with any nation;
And as for his ordinances, they have not known them.
Praise ye Jehovah. (Psa. 147. 7–9, 14, 15, 20.)

For thus saith Jehovah to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. (Jer. 4. 3.)

CHAPTER I

THE COUNTRY CHURCH CHALLENGED

Both the changes in country life everywhere apparent and the underlying importance of certain facts about country conditions constitute a challenge which the church must consider. It must ask whether all resources are being capitalized and all possible plans made in order that the people and children of the "scattered populations" may be assured of Christian oversight and nurture.

The Question

Rural life is on the move. New scientific discoveries and inventions are neither more striking in number nor more interesting in fact than the changes going on in American country life. Even a brief list of new organizations and movements leaves one amazed at the change taking place, and wondering what the future will bring forth. The farm bureau, the farmers' union, the grange, the rural free mail delivery with an astounding circulation of farm journals and scientific agricultural literature, the telephone, radiophone, county agents, home demonstrators, consolidated schools, organizations for recreation, college courses in rural sociology, extension service from educational institutions, boys' and girls' clubs, volunteer study clubs, educational movements emanating from large industrial concerns (such as the Ford Films and International Harvester studies), cooperative stores and shipping associations—all these are developments of the last two decades.

Amidst this activity and bustle, these changed conditions and changing habits, stands the country church. Are the organization and program of the country church sufficient for this new life which has so suddenly engulfed us?

What is to be the church's method? In this study we

do not concern ourselves with its message. This is not to imply that the message is of secondary importance. God has not been eliminated because other items of life have been introduced. The Christian message of brotherhood has not been silenced by the hum of motors and the buzz of many gatherings. Rather, there is greater need than ever before for the message. It is harder to play the good Samaritan in an auto than on foot. Who I am, or why I am, is not answered over the telephone nor by the extension service from colleges. The gospel—Christ's message concerning God, one's fellows and oneself—must be made clear by the church. The very urgency of the message is the reason for the study of methods.

It is in this realm of method that we must ask ourselves some questions frankly. Again, are the present organization and program of the country church sufficient for this new life which has so suddenly engulfed it? Can it beckon these movements to their highest goals? Can it keep their methods human? Can it surcharge this age and these movements with Christlike idealism? If it does not, what will? Merely to be moving fast is dangerous. If a wreck is to occur an ox cart is safer than the twentieth-century limited. Rural life is moving but whether its destination is the achievement of moral goodness, social betterment, spiritual satisfactions and permanent value depends more upon what the country church is doing and is going to do than upon any other factor.

The Study of Facts

To study facts is imperative. Conditions existing to-day which are good or bad, desirable or undesirable, are the result of causes which have long been operating. Because it is difficult to locate a cause we must not deny its existence. This is God's world—a world of unescapable law. The conditions which exist in any church or community are the result of other conditions which existed a few months or years ago. A church in which no one but the preacher can lead in prayer only shows that in the past its children and youth have not been trained to pray.

Henry van Dyke's suggestion that if a man would "keep his record true" he must "think without confusion clearly"

is very much to the point here. The thought which is directing our country-church life must be very clear in relation to economic, social, and religious facts. "Study to show thyself approved."[1] needs also be read, "Study to show thy church approved—an institution that needeth not to be ashamed." A church which cannot be financed because the community has filled up with renters or foreign-born needs to study two things; economic conditions resulting from absentee landlordism and methods of ministry successful among the foreign born.

That conditions are imperfect and results less than satisfactory only means that more thought, more effort, and more prayer must be applied. One of the gravest dangers in country-church work is an attitude of mind in both ministers and laymen which assumes that because the church work is handicapped and difficult it is practically useless or impossible. The pastor wants to move to another field and the people are discouraged. Doctors do not move out because a disease has become epidemic; they "dig in." They diagnose for causes and attempt to suggest remedies. Community and church ills are similar to physical ills in many respects. They occur everywhere, are contagious, often chronic, and may become deadly; but they do not disappear by magic because they are hated or feared. They result from deep-lying causes which must be diagnosed and cured. In safeguarding the present and preparing for the future the country church has an opportunity to render signal service. The first requisite is a study of all the facts, a charting of all the needs, and a blue-printing of future plans.

The Breakdown of Boundaries

Several forces have entered rural life which entirely break down the neighborhood and community boundary lines of twenty-five years ago. No one questions that the automobile is the most significant of these forces. No one ought, on the other hand, to deny that the automobile is a factor of great value in country life. It is one of the most beneficent agents for improving rural life that

[1] 2 Tim. 2. 15.

inventive skill has yet produced. It must be used and not abused. Its promiscuous and unrestrained use by unchaperoned youth is an abuse and a serious moral menace that cannot be lightly dismissed. But when all dangers of the automobile are considered it is plain that its chief influence is in the direction of changing community boundaries. Whereas the community of a few years ago was naturally limited to a radius of three or four miles, it is now increased to a radius of eight or ten miles or else loses its identity altogether. In former times no social gathering could be held more than six or seven miles distant from the farthest home, because of slow travel. Now eighteen to twenty miles are traveled more easily than were four or five in days past.

While old community boundaries have been broken up, new ones have not been satisfactorily determined. That new adjustments and boundaries should be settled as quickly as possible is imperative. Old-time debating societies and lyceum meetings which included home-talent features have gone. Neighborhood parties in the homes of the community are largely gone. Young people are seeking amusement in more distant moving-picture theaters and public dance halls, or are being restrained in their country home to a point of rebellion. Often this rebellion, after childhood is past, breaks out in unrestrained indulgences of youth.

However, other forces are entering to assist in reestablishing community agencies and boundaries. The programs of the Farm Bureau with its township organization and its affiliated boys' and girls' club work are of great value. The consolidation and centralized school movement is doing much in building a new community solidarity. In connection with its athletic organizations, its dramatic contests and its pageantry it is stimulating the development of a great deal of talent. Both the needs and the forces which are at work make it plain that the country church is challenged to attempt a tremendous task. She must lead in developing cooperation between all agencies. By nature and right she is placed in a position of parent institution in the community. But, above all, her program must be sufficient to capitalize the larger resources of the

larger community. There is no occasion for her to be jealous of other institutions. There is every reason for the fullest cooperation of all community institutions. But she is challenged to develop her religious life, her religious educational facilities, and her contacts with men, whereby religion shall retain its rightful place in individual as well as community life. She it is that ought to help most in the new community alignments and boundaries. She it is that must give character values to boys' and girls' club work. She it is that is charged with the responsibility for moral, ethical, and religious ideals. When old conditions are disintegrating and new conditions are being adjusted, then the church is challenged to her most careful oversight, teaching, and evangelism.

The Numbers of Country People

The challenge to the country church is perhaps greatest because of the numbers of rural people. About thirty-eight per cent of the population of the United States live in the open country. There are a few miners, lumbermen, and fishermen who belong to this rural group, but the overwhelming majority, or nearly forty millions, are farmers. When we add to this number the ten millions, comprising an addditional nine per cent, who live in country towns and rightfully belong to the rural classification of "twenty-five hundred population and less," we are dealing with vast numbers of people.

The importance of this rural group becomes the more significant when compared with other groups. The highest figures given concerning illiteracy show that there are fewer than five million illiterate people in the United States, yet these have been the cause of a great national movement. The labor-union movement does not comprise over five million. The Negro population of the United States totals over eleven million. The slum populations of depraved city sections constitute a total far less than any number here suggested. In contrast with the publicity given these other groups let it be remembered that the rural church has a ministry to a population more than five times larger than the largest of any other special class or group in America.

The Country's Childhood and Youth

There are more children in country homes than in city homes. As a rule the families are larger and the home life is more nearly normal. Mr. Galpin, of the United States Department of Agriculture, has recently shown that there are two million more children in the rural population of thirty million than in the urban population of like number. Although it is not possible to develop large schools in the country because of the handicap of distance, yet the educational need is greater because of the larger total of children to be reached. The country school must be small, but we may have many of them, and in the last analysis the future is affected not by the size of the separate schools, but by the total number of children reached.

The moral and ethical conditions in many rural sections are alarming, but the worst crime and vice are not in the country. The war examinations tended to show that the country young men were not, as had been supposed, superior in physical strength to city young men. Satisfactory data along this line have not as yet become the possession of the popular mind. Whatever the records may reveal, it must be admitted that there is an elemental moral fiber exhibited in the physical life of the country. In one county of the Middle West four hundred and three young men went before the examining physician, among whom only three were found infected with social disease. Less than three fourths of one per cent is an encouraging average. The annual report of one of the State penal institutions for boys shows for the biennial period ending June 30, 1920, an enrollment of 480 boys. From villages and towns there were sixty-two; from cities between 2,000 and 4,000 there were forty-seven; from cities of 4,000 to 8,000—sixty-seven; cities of 8,000 to 25,000—one hundred and eight; from cities of 25,000 and over—one hundred and ninety-six; from the farm—none. These figures are the more significant when it is taken into consideration that 63.7 per cent of that State's population live in the country. It has only nine cities of more than 25,000 population and only one of these exceeds 100,000. The chal-

lenge to the country church is to preserve this elemental strength and moral fiber by making character definitely Christian.

The Country Church Close to the Land

"The two chief physical forces of economic value are land and labor."[2] The importance of land in the economic order of society has never been sufficiently estimated. For the solution of our economic and social problems the church is not called upon to furnish the method but it must furnish the spirit and ideals. Absentee landlordism, the increase and maintenance of soil fertility, agricultural taxation—these are all crucial problems—so crucial that they will largely determine American destiny within the next half century.

"Our system of land tenure in America is atrocious. Leases are for the most part of one year's duration. The tenant tries to get all he can from the soil and put back as little as possible. If he fails on one farm he knows he can move elsewhere, so he feels less interest than the owner in the community institutions such as the church, school, grange. He has no sense of a permanent home and the responsibility which that means. Every survey proves this. The former owner, who either to secure the benefits of town life for himself and his family or to take advantage of the rising price of land, has formed new associations and interests, forgets that even absentee landlords have community obligations."

"'How long have you lived on this farm?' a home mission secretary asked a weary-eyed slip of a woman who had answered his knock.

"'About six months,' was the dull-toned reply. 'Lord, Mister, we don't stay nowhere. We have had twenty-five farms since Jim and me settled down twenty-five years ago.'"[3]

The future of Protestantism is threatened by the increase of land tenantry. The hope of a church, free to develop and promote its work and program, depends upon a free land-holding class. A pastor who had given twenty-

[2] *Rural Social Organization*, E. L. Earp, p. 23.
[3] *The Country Church in the New World Order*, E. DeS. Brunner, p. 20.

five years of his life to the rural church recently spoke before a rural conference.[4] Two facts were made conspicuous by his address: first, the unusual success of the work was due to the long and constructive pastorate as a result of which the church was widely known; and, second, next to the evangelistic mission of the church he preached the gospel of land ownership as the solution of rural problems. Statistics show that one half of the homes of the community in which he ministered are equipped with bathrooms and almost as many with sleeping porches. A consolidated school built over ten years ago averages over one hundred pupils in its high school, whereas the year prior to its erection only seven students were going from this same territory to a neighboring high school. In this community in which the tenure of office of the pastor has been twenty-five years and the gospel of land ownership has been emphasized, the church equipment could not be duplicated to-day for less than $100,000.

Developing Rural-Mindedness

Country people are not rural-minded. They think of, and hope for, an early removal to the city. They have dreamed of it and attempted to work toward it. City life, with its supposed ease, its social life, more vivacious, though doubtless less sincere, and its many bright attractions, has been widely considered the *summum bonum*. Country people live in the country only long enough to get money to live somewhere else. A recent study of four hundred and fifty newspapers revealed how completely this idea masters even the news columns of the rural press. Most personal items about country people chronicle their trips away from the country. There are practically no news items indigenous to farm and country life. "Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schwart and sons, John and Henry, motored to Indianapolis for the week-end." "Mr. and Mrs. H. Larson and daughter, Elizabeth, are planning to spend the winter in California," or their summer in the north. These are the type of items usually found. It is perfectly clear that the personal news items which are needed are those which make for a better appreciation

[4] The Rev. A. P. Blough, pastor of Orange Township church, Waterloo, Iowa.

of country life rather than a desire to get away from it. Items concerning Mr. Schwart's dairy herd and Mrs. Larson's poultry flock would tend to increase contentment with and appreciation for rural life. The country church has an unrivaled opportunity to assist in transforming vague tolerance into high appreciation of the meaning and value of country life.

Dr. Warren H. Wilson pays a high tribute to the Mormons in their relationship to farming. He says: "They teach their children, and they discipline themselves, to love the country, to appreciate its advantages and to recognize that their own welfare is bound up in their success as farmers, and in the continuance of their farming communities. This agricultural organization centers in their country churches. They have turned the force of religion into a community-making power, and from the highest to the lowest of their church officers the Mormon people are devoted to agriculture as a mode of living."[5]

Books for Reference

The Life of John Frederick Oberlin, A. F. Beard (The Pilgrim Press).

Six Thousand Country Churches, C. O. Gill and G. Pinchot (The Macmillan Company).

The Making of a Country Parish, H. S. Mills (Missionary Education Movement).

Readings in Rural Sociology, J. Philan (Macmillan Co.)

For Discussion

1. What important changes in communication or transportation have occurred to affect spiritual conditions within the past ten years?
2. To what extent does lack of church attendance indicate lack of religious interest?
3. What community conditions to-day are directly a result of conditions of twenty-five years ago?
4. What changes of boundary lines are in evidence in your community?
5. How many tenant and how many owner farmers are there in this community?

[5] *The Evolution of the Country Community,* p. 63. Congregational Publishing Society, publishers.

Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass in the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *shall he clothe* you, O ye of little faith? (Luke 12. 27, 28.)

And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he is keeping the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. And Jehovah said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he. (1 Sam. 16. 11, 12.)

And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. . . . And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people. (2 Kings 4. 8, 13.)

CHAPTER II

THE RESOURCES AND ADVANTAGES OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

THERE is valuable suggestion in the song, "Count Your Many Blessings, Name Them One by One." Country life has advantages. These need to be emphasized. One of the most serious obstacles which we face in the country church is the large number of people who can count its defects and the small number who are recounting its advantages. Those who would be helpful must earnestly set about the task of enumerating the definite resources and rejoicing in all the evident values and what they promise. Just as soil is tested and its valuable elements noted, so the community and church life must be analyzed and its conditions of promise catalogued. In planning to go forward we must always start from where we are. Justifiable pride will be aroused, enthusiasm stirred, and loyalty assured by naming and renaming the benefits and blessings of country life as they are related to the church and its ideals. There are many country people who feel a sense of depression solely because their eyes have not been opened. They have thought urban life to be so much better and brighter that it beckons them. It is not to be denied that city life has advantages, but that country life has a uniqueness and a value all its own is the central thought of this chapter.

THE COUNTRY CHURCH CLOSE TO NATURE

Country life is everywhere favorable to the observation and development of religious principles and instincts. The growth of plant life, the procreation of animal life, annual and perennial renewal of all nature's forms, rains from the heavens, dews from the earth, talus from the mountain and riverside—all speak in many voices of God, of his eternal verities and abiding presence. The country

church has no setting to create, no artificial structure of faith to construct. It has, instead, the incomparable opportunity of using materials everywhere at hand. "Consider the lilies, how they grow." It has only to make the largest and best use of illustrative material lying all about it. From the deep canyons of the city even sunrise and sunset and the stars' encircling glory are hidden from view. Robert Louis Stevenson could hardly have been walking on cobblestones when he said:

> "The world is so full of a number of things,
> I am sure we should all be as happy as kings."

Recently I sat on the shore of Lake Michigan within a portion of the park system of Greater Chicago. The wondrous beauty of the moonlit waters and surroundings was quite beyond description. If they did not talk in intelligible language of God, they certainly moved one toward him. Love's movements and beckonings are frequently beyond the realm of thought or the power of expression in words. I soon discovered, however, that the heart of beauty in the scene was in the grass, the flowers, and the trees. These things that are native to the countryside cost the park board millions for space and care. Their infinite value to the feverish, lonesome heart is fully recognized only in their absence, but the country has them in profusion. What an incomparable opportunity is afforded the Christian Church in this natural material on which to build the Christian idea of God and his relationship to the earth and to man!

The Country Church Close to the Family

Professor Charles Horton Cooley, of the University of Michigan, has pointed out that the family, the neighborhood, and the community are the primary groups in the building of society. He shows that all civilization is constructed upon the basis of face-to-face relationships between people.[1] In rural regions the church is at the very center of these primary groups. The minister and workers have more repeated and continuous personal contacts than is possible in the city church. There are fewer diverting

[1] *Social Organization*, Charles H. Cooley, chap. iii.

influences at work in the country than in the city. In one call the pastor can interview the entire family. The family is together at meal times. Its solidarity is unshaken. The family travels together, eats together, lives together, spends more evenings together. Even when all are at work there is a cooperation, a working together at the same tasks and for the same ends, that cannot occur within city family life.

Undoubtedly, religious education through the family will assume larger and larger proportions. The church as a whole is beginning to study more carefully the religious influences operating through the home and family life. The character training which depends upon obedience, control, companionship, and cooperation will increase in importance and the church will plan and try out programs in order best to develop these primary virtues of the home. For this educational work the country has special resources.

Country Resources for Character Formation

Among the more valuable habits naturally inculcated by country life are industry, thrift, management, and creative effort. These character-building habits constitute one of the important resources of the country church. It is doubtful if they have often been adequately appreciated.

The loss in character which results from idleness has long been recognized. Idleness can more easily be prevented in the country where life naturally teaches the habit of *industry*. There is work for all and certain tasks can be easily performed by children. There is nothing harsh or unnatural about being industrious. Moreover, these activities are of the most interesting type, for they have to do with animals and growing things. Thus, country children and youth are more easily taught to work than city children. This, probably more than any other reason, accounts for the fact that so large a proportion of American leadership has come from the country.

This habit of work is a resource of moral idealism and character, both ready for investment and capable of development. Too often the argument for advanced education has savored of the thought that mental training relieves one of hard work. This is an error of theory as well as of

practice. Those who are truly trained mentally are putting in the longest hours and are laboring the hardest. Edward Bok gives a most interesting account of securing the late President Roosevelt's contribution to the *Ladies Home Journal*.[2] The only time which Mr. Roosevelt could devote to it was while he was being shaved. A stenographer was secured who took the dictation during the operation of the barber. While this incident is, of course, unique, it is in a measure typical of the terrific burdens which American leadership is carrying. Education seeks for those who have learned to work, not for those who desire release from it. All progress depends upon work and fidelity to trust. Jesus suggests the Christian principle in "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." That group of American youth which is learning best the lessons and habits of work can most easily be taught the lessons and habits of God and will also contribute most in the service of the future.

In character training through *thrift* the country also has an important advantage. Here the natural contact with property is valuable. In the country the family owns all of the tools with which the daily work is performed. Usually, all the family capital is in plain sight. The return upon this capital depends upon effort. The only mystery involved is that of weather conditions. Misfortune here can often be offset by cultivation and care, but, if accident occurs, it is a shock to the entire family finances. In the city, if an accident demolishes a street car, the motorman's salary goes on in spite of the accident. The father does not own the car which he runs. But in the country an accident to the harvester is a disaster known and felt by the entire family. It affects their future plans and they all suffer. This close contact with the factors which produce wealth and property make natural an entirely different code of property ethics. An accident occurred on the Illinois Central railway. A freight train of twenty-three cars was totally wrecked. The train crew sat in a neighboring hotel at dinner that evening, talking volubly and laughing about the accident and what it would cost the old railroad company. Such a condition

[2] *The Americanization of Edward Bok*, p. 275.

of detached indifference decays the body politic like dry rot.

In the country, whether in work or play, there is constant challenge to the individual's alertness, adaptability, *initiative,* and originality. Driving a team requires some managerial ability. In the city children and young people go out in search of amusement. In the country they must create it; but there are a hayloft in which to play, a straw stack in which twine string may be hunted, old lumber and tools with which to build things, and space in the grove in which to build them. The same type of challenge is involved in the work of the country. The harness may break. It may be repaired by wire from the fence, or a tie strap from the horse's bridle, or anything else which will serve, but it must be fixed; the work must go on. The result is everywhere a benefit to character and a training for leadership.

In the face of all this the church stands challenged to the task of conservation. To no institution could these factors mean so much as to the church; they constitute elemental strength. A close study of the Bible reveals that a very large proportion, more than half, of Jesus' illustrations and words were rural in type and meaning. He lived among rural men. The fishing villages of his day were composed of country people. He called country men into his apostleship. Country people are not stingy; they are not backward; they are not undiscerning or untrained in the dominant values of human life and experience. They are just unchallenged. They more often represent vast stores of power which have never been released; their particular resources are untouched.

Close Personal Relationships

The country parish gives opportunity for closer personal contacts with the pastor. Great city churches are developing a staff of workers: for instance, a city church of twelve hundred members is expected to have a staff of at least five paid workers. One of these is a specialist with young people, one visits the sick and needy, another has charge of the music, and so on. This shows that even the city church sees the need for closer personal contact between

the worker and the membership and is trying to break up the larger group in order to give that opportunity. But this advantage the country parish already has. There can be no denial that in many cases the group is too small and the contact is too intimate. Denominational competitions have developed until in some communities there are too many churches and as a result the work is seriously handicapped. But the fact remains that the earnest church and the consecrated pastor thereof find a challenging task in the development of personal and group resources to meet needs which are known so well that they cannot be ignored. Too often the city preacher can make a marked success by stressing desired ends and dodging undesirable ones; but in the country, issues must be met. Problems are too close at hand to be avoided, and as a consequence friendships are more deeply rooted, spiritual guidance is more carefully given, and the entire fabric of Christian civilization is more solid.

In the city each one is acted upon by intangible forces of economic combinations. In the economic order of the country the owner and operator of the land are known by all. This knowledge of owners as persons is a most important advantage in working out Christian relationships. We are most careful, thoughtful, and brotherly in our relationships to the property, the interests, and the welfare of those within our own kinship. This care and thoughtfulness and brotherliness decrease in an inverse ratio to our ignorance of the people who own the property with which we are in contact.

One of the tendencies threatening church life to-day is its attempt to render wholesale service. There can be no foundation and undergirding of personal religion without personal contacts of those who are seeking to learn together the lessons and the meaning of religion. "This the church must do as Jesus did, by making a direct appeal to the conscience of each individual. There is no wholesale way of saving man."[3]

In the country the minister stands out as a leader more significantly than in the city amid philanthropic and

[3] *The Church in America*, William Adams Brown, p. 131. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

business experts. He is almost the only social worker. He is the first to be called upon for leadership in larger services. This emphasizes the importance of religion as the head and heart of the community. Likewise the members and constituents of the church in the country constitute the group of largest power. They are a loyal group of workers.

Physical Freedom in the Country

The physical tension of city life is tremendous. There are a confusion of sounds for the ear, a moving complex for the eyes, hard surfaced roadways and pathways for the feet, and constant jostling and pressure from the crowds. And there is the continuous physical strain of keeping up with the speed of the machinery of industry. The country furnishes harmony for the ear, beauty for the eye, grass and leaves of the earth for the feet. There are air to breathe, space to move in, and silence for rest and thought. The bodies and souls of human beings have a better chance for growth and wholesome development in the country.

Books for Reference

The Challenge of the Country, G. W. Fiske (Association Press).

The Farmer and the New Day, K. L. Butterfield (The Macmillan Company).

The Evolution of the Country Community, W. H. Wilson (The Pilgrim Press).

For Discussion

1. Name five of the chief assets of this parish.
2. What could the church do to help the residents of your community to appreciate country life?
3. What things have you in mind when you quote Robert Louis Stevenson's verse, "We should all be as happy as kings"?
4. Which makes it easier for a child to think of God as creating all things, a growing tree or an automobile factory?
5. Are the character-building resources of work and play

made the most of in your neighborhood? What improvements can you suggest?

6. What forward movements in your country have been developed without the leadership and aid of Christians?

7. Give instances of "a pastor's call that meant much to me."

8. Do you agree that being among acquaintances aids one in doing his best, while being among strangers often encourages carelessness?

And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, every male, by their polls; from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel, thou and Aaron shall number them by their hosts. And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of his father's house. (Numbers 1. 1-4.)

For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he hath *wherewith* to complete it? (Luke 14. 28.)

CHAPTER III

BUILDING THE PROGRAM FROM THE COMMUNITY NEEDS

Both the mission of service in the parish and the pulpit message must bear directly upon conditions of life within the community. Some sins are due to neglect of responsibility, some are due to commission of wrong; but both neglect and wrongdoing arise from differing sources in different communities. Some sins are due to ignorance, in which cases information must be supplied; some are due to debasing recreations for which there must be substitutions; some are due to undeveloped talent for which there must be a challenge.

The Church Studying Its Community

A community survey is as necessary to the church as the blue print is to the builder of the cathedral. The program of the church should help to cure existent evils. In many communities there is too much riding and too little reading. The loss in character from this condition is clearly apparent. It is also apparent that the evils can be cured only by the most untiring efforts in arousing and training the desire for reading, plus advice and assistance in providing the necessary literature. Numberless other evils could be named, the cure of which will come to pass only as remedial plans and agencies are set in motion.

The prevention of possible evils is a constant challenge to the church program. All communities are in constant danger from new forms of commercialized recreation. The surest safeguard is a church program of recreational and social life which is attractive to all ages in the community. Many churches are providing themselves with gymnasiums, social rooms and club rooms whereby this need is being met. The church at Plymouth, Iowa, for the past decade has rented the town opera house and thereby has controlled the type of events held in its chief amusement hall.

The church is continuously responsible for setting in motion those forces which will result in greater community good. In many communities the percentage of high-school graduates who continue their education in college and university is very small. Various methods may be used in creating a larger interest in higher education. Both student and faculty representatives may be brought in from colleges to meet parents and high-school students. In one community the day of prayer for colleges was utilized for this purpose. The pastor of the church invited the parents of all young people who were away at college and the parents of the high-school seniors to a noonday luncheon. Two young men from the junior class in a neighboring college were invited to speak at the luncheon. In the evening a young people's rally was held, in which these young men led in a short program of talks and in a social hour of games. The day of prayer for colleges was thereby taken into the thought of parents and into the entire community life. It also was used to increase an interest in college attendance.

If vulgar music is lying upon the pianos, some education for better music needs to be started. In one community only eighty-one out of one hundred and eighty-two homes had a library of twenty or more books, and yet every home had an automobile. In such a community, a "Buy-A-Book" campaign needs to be organized. It should be shown that one can go much farther in a book costing two dollars than on gasoline costing the same amount.

If children are not attending Sunday school and religious educational classes because roads are poor, roads must be improved. The marvelous development of an open country church in Iowa, known as Buck Creek, near Hopkinton, had its inception in the improvement of the road which ran directly in front of the church. If children are not coming because of distances and parents will not bring them, then busses must be provided. We are doing it for education in the day schools and we must do it for education in religion.

This brief reference to a few of many community problems reveals the importance of making a community study. All modern churches are doing this. They are zealously

attempting to find out the bottom facts about the causes and effects of the many influences at work in their community.

What the Survey Should Include

No fact of community life is insignificant, for, like the child, the community is affected by every liability and aided by every good influence that comes into its life. Watch the mother during the first twelve months of care for her infant. She considers the importance of food, sleep, bathing, clothing, playthings, air, and every seemingly trifling detail. In the community, likewise, the church should take note of all influences and their reaction. When John Frederick Oberlin was besieged to leave his isolated parish in Alsace-Lorraine his answer was, "It took me ten years to learn every head in this parish, making an inventory of the moral, intellectual, and domestic wants of each. . . . I must have at least ten years to carry these into execution, and I shall need the ten following to correct their faults and vices."[1]

Personal data are important. Whether there are nine hundred and sixty-seven people in the community or nine hundred and sixty-eight is significant, for the nine hundred and sixty-eighth might become a community leader, or a moral leper. He may be a sick child that can be brought to health even as Theodore Roosevelt, who from a puny childhood was helped to physical strength, moral force, and ethical integrity that made him known over the world as the typical American. The exact number of mothers who have infants and children of pre-school age should be known. They need to be supplied with pamphlets from the American Home Series, various government bulletins, and other available literature relating to the care and nurture of children. In one community there were found to be three hundred and thirty-four young people between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one, and yet the Epworth League devotional and social gatherings never had over sixty in attendance. The number of people who have musical talent, dramatic ability, or leadership capacities needs to be known and catalogued.

[1] Beard, *The Life of John Frederick Oberlin*, p. 138.

Twenty acres of land uncultivated in any community will call forth consternation and criticism, but too often the church has never asked concerning the wasted and undeveloped talent within the same boundaries. A single talent unaroused and undeveloped is many times more significant than a thousand acres of uncultivated land. "Know thyself" spoken to the individual must be paralelled with the challenge to "know thyself" within the church community. The church needs to know the nativity, race, and religious preferences of all within its territory. Especially should it know these if it is the only church in the community. Its program can then include special contributions from these various groups. One church recently gave an evening to Norwegian folk songs. The music was artistically executed and many were amazed at the results in breaking up clannish, nationalistic lines in the community.

The social activities of the community life should be known and tabulated. Some of the questions that need to be answered are as follows: How many baseball games, how many dances, how many pageants, how many dramas, how many Epworth League socials, how many Cradle Roll parties occurred during the past twelve months? How many people find their whole social life within a club, a lodge, or a narrow group? After such questions are answered, the church can begin to plan a more balanced program for its entire constituency.

The statistics of community wealth must serve as an important guide in the church plans. What the community possesses and how it is spending this wealth ought to determine the equipment and materials which can be afforded for an expanding program of religious education and social progress. Data concerning community wealth are always illuminating. A rural pastor once faced the task of raising a few hundred dollars from a small farming community for a denominational college. The people professed poverty and excused themselves with the cry of hard times. But the banks reported $780,000 in deposits, on which the interest at four per cent would have paid the apportionment many times over. During the Great War the Red Cross asked one small county for

$5,000—a staggering total, apparently. But the three banks of the county reported that one Saturday's business over their counters amounted to more than $300,000 and the people saw their power and gladly accepted their quota so lately grumbled at. "What is money in the bank, when the colleges stand ready to train our children and the Red Cross stands ready to save the lives of our boys?"

There must not be a "no man's land" between churches. Sheep are not left to run about on ranches unclaimed. "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep!" The northern boundary of one parish must be the southern responsibility of another. Each organization must accept its full responsibility for all the religious needs of the people clear up to the dividing line. This, of course, means that there should be a boundary line, clearly marked and mutually agreed upon.

A method of study and inspiration which has been used in many community institute programs is worked out on a blackboard divided by a line in the center. Upon one side is placed the caption, "What this community has"; upon the other is placed "What this community needs." The people are led to form their own conclusions. Every year aims and goals should be worked over by local leadership. Upon the encouragement and enthusiasm of what the community has, it must press forward toward what it needs. In addition to a notation of the needs, there is often decided the time limit which shall be established as a goal for the accomplishment of the need. Below is a sample of such a community study. This study device may be used frequently in church boards, community gatherings, and leadership groups.

WHAT THIS COMMUNITY HAS	WHAT THIS COMMUNITY NEEDS
1. Two churches	1. Better cooperative spirit
2. A consolidated school	2. A community building (5 years)
3. A splendid water supply	3. A county nurse
Etc.	Etc.

Various types of studies and surveys can and should be made. The history of the community should frequently be rehearsed. It has perennial force in quickening the purpose of youth and of its leadership. Knowledge of the courage of pioneer times will ever inspire to nobler deeds in these later days. Harvest-home celebrations furnish an important opportunity to present community facts of moral and material import. Statistics of twelve months that show lowering criminal records, increasing educational emphasis and progressive religious plans will be met with significant response at such times. Community pride can be aroused by compiled material facts also. The people of Rawlins County, Kansas, were made to feel more deeply their local obligations when shown that in one favorable season their wheat crop totaled two and one half million bushels. The figures upon such matters may well be worked out in detail. Let the number of cars and the length of the trains required to haul such a crop be accurately stated. The best results will occur from pursuing surveys and studies singly. Oftentimes too much is attempted at once and the results attained do not appear to justify the efforts put forth.

How Shall the Survey Be Made?

The first requisite for making the survey is an adequate organization and preparation for the work. The business organization of the church should include a director of surveys. Special workers will need to be trained to cooperate with him. The community should always be prepared by a frank and full statement of the reasons for the survey and of how the facts derived from it are to be used. Some of the more accessible findings can easily be stated in a preliminary way. The public must never be left any grounds for suspicion concerning the project and should be prepared for the appearance of the workers.

The work is carried on in some churches by the young peoples' department of the Sunday school; in others by the appointment of special adult committees. This is a good task also for the third department of the Epworth League. The pastor should help, but should never do it

all. He will need to go over all of the information very carefully. It will naturally mean more for his work than for that of any other one leader; however, if the community is to reap the larger results from the studies, it must assist in making them. The work will be found intensely interesting. One young woman returned from such a survey trip and reported with amazement that a Mohammedan family was living only three and one half miles from the church. In fact, before the survey was finished three Mohammedan families were discovered in that community.

Maps will be necessary showing the residences of people by neighborhoods or districts. The homes should be indicated by family name, or a number index whereby the name can be easily located.

Survey cards are a necessity. Most home mission boards are putting out household cards which may be used and which can be secured upon request through the pastor. Cards may always be prepared and secured locally, if desired; oftentimes the interest is greater when they are prepared by the group that is making the study.

What Use Shall Be Made of the Findings?

Having made the study of the community, the statistics should be compiled and given wide publicity. Charts should be made and exhibited on bulletin boards in conspicuous places. The newspapers will be glad to use much of the tabulation. Each organization of the church should be made familiar with the needs revealed by the survey. The entire future of the community is being determined by the foundations which are laid to-day. Social science is much interested in what happened here thirty years ago. The church needs to be just as much interested in what is going to happen thirty years from now in its own community. Its program must be made in the full realization of what the community needs.

Books for Reference

The Story of Belleville, N. Y., Community, Department of Agriculture Bulletin No. 984.

The Community Survey in Relation to Church Efficiency, C. E. Carroll.

The Farmer and His Community, D. Sanderson (Harcourt, Brace & Co.).

Introduction to Rural Sociology, P. L. Vogt.

For Discussion

1. Do you find any likeness in the purpose of Moses' "numbering of the people" during the wilderness journey to that of a survey in our community to-day? What was the importance then, and now?

2. Why should a church keep a record of its members and no record of those who should be brought into its membership?

3. What facts does this community need to know about itself that could be obtained by a survey? If this should not be attempted all at once, what information is most important to get first? Why?

4. How can we prepare our community for a survey?

5. How can we answer personal objections to giving information when the survey is being taken?

6. What relation has the wealth of a community to its responsibility for furnishing equipment for religious, educational, social, and recreational purposes?

7. Why is it important to develop community pride? Will enumerating its possessions and resources do this?

One of the two that heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter). On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me. (John 1. 40–43.)

And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him. (Acts 8. 29-31.)

And Simon and they that were with him followed after him; and they found him and say unto him, All are seeking thee. And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth. And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons. (Mark 1. 36-39.)

CHAPTER IV

EVANGELISM IN THE COUNTRY

Evangelistic fervor is as much needed to-day as ever. Any program which uses more people, creates more leadership, and opens the building more often should not decrease either the length or the urgency of the preaching message. The week-day program is the cultivation of the soil. The evangelistic message and labor are the heat necessary for character germination and growth.

Religious Education and Evangelism

It is a mistaken notion that there is a conflict between evangelism and religious education. Both are necessary; "both" rather than "either" must be uppermost in our thought and speech. Some are inquiring whether religion is taught or caught. Fires catch where materials are inflammable. Where the mind is uninformed, undeveloped, or wastefully employed, where the will is not under control, where the practices of life have been sordid and base, there the flames of evangelism do not easily catch. In building fires laying the kindling is very important. Religious education is endeavoring to prepare the mind, will, and practices of life that spiritual fires may find ready fuel. All statistics of evangelism furnish proof of this fact. Those who are caught in evangelistic effort are usually those who were taught at mother's knee, who at Sunday school or at some other place came into contact with a person who gave lessons in the religious ways of life. Those who have not been thus "taught" are not, in any perceptible numbers, being "caught."

"No Man's Land"

"No man's land" exists about three miles beyond every country church. It is that territory from which people do not come to church and to which the ministers and church

officials very seldom go, except for funerals. In the average well-settled rural community there are from two to four miles in every direction beyond this three-mile radius where there is little or no religious education and no pastoral visitation. Even where many small churches are struggling to exist the situation is no better, and often worse. Bitter hatreds and jealousies have produced an irreligion which is worse than neglect. "No man's land" must be invaded and its people evangelized.

"The church must minister in some way to all the people. Some (churches) are aristocratic and exclusive. They gather to themselves a number of select families who have common tastes and are congenial with one another. They have good times together and within that narrow circle there is a delightful social life. These few people are well trained, and well instructed in the facts and principles of religion as they are understood by them. But they do not seem to get hold of the idea that the church is for all the people; that as Jesus conceived it it is essentially democratic. They have no sense of obligation for the community at large, and make no effort to affect it as a whole and lift it up to a higher level.

"The village church that would do its work must be democratic and must have a community consciousness. It must belong to the people."[1]

The Church and "Outsiders"

When an individual takes membership in a church he lays a responsibility upon that church to provide him with pastoral care and leadership. The responsibility of the church in this regard is not limited to its actual membership but extends to the last individual in its parish. Evangelism is more than revivalism. It is a continuous process. It is the persistent revelation of the mind and heart of God to people who have not come into fellowship with him. It is urgent that all who do not know him as a personal Father shall come to that knowledge. This urgency must be expressed in more than a preach-

[1] Mills, *The Making of a Country Parish*, p. 114. Missionary Education Movement, publishers.

ing message, it must partake of the nature of parental care. Parents discriminate between their children who are easily controlled and those who are prone to break with home regulations, but neither love nor nurture is lessened thereby. The evangelism of the church must share this same parental attitude.

People who do not come to church must be persistently and continually given a type of care and shown a spirit of fraternity and comradeship which will make them desire to participate in the fellowship of the church. Sympathy in illness and fellowship in trouble are important evangelistic methods. A young farmer in a certain community was forced into bankruptcy. He was a good farmer, one of the best in the neighborhood. His family of young children had been seriously ill and he had suffered from crop failures. Although not a church man, he was everywhere recognized as a good citizen and an exemplary young man. On the morning of his bankruptcy sale he was intoxicated beyond mental poise. This was the first time his neighbors had ever seen him intoxicated or known of his using liquors. After the sale he left the community a broken-hearted, discouraged man. His finances could have been saved with a loan of a thousand dollars from some of his church friends. The loan itself would have been a blessing to the churchmen as well as to the young farmer.

The church has too often waited for folks to come to its pews. It has asked: "Well, what can we do if they don't come to church? How can we reach them?" The answer is, "By going to them." As well cease to practice the healing art of medicine where there are no hospitals as to confine the mission of Christianity to the spoken message within the church.

Methods of Personal Evangelistic Cultivation

When the war opened in 1914, Germany had a vast advantage in almost perfect knowledge of the territory over which her armies were to move to capture Paris and Warsaw. As a German sympathizer wrote, "We had mapped every forest and stream, every coal and iron mine,

every garrison and gun site, every railroad and resting place. We had made an accurate survey of the men and money and machinery available and all plans for their mobilization. We had anticipated every emergency from the loss of a horse shoe to the defeat of a division."[2] The church's plan of evangelism must be as carefully charted and the details of individual temperament as fully known. Armies master topography. The church must master temperament.

The personal evangelistic plan should include a list of wedding anniversaries and birthdays covering the whole parish. These lists should be in the possession of the pastor and special workers of the church, Sunday-school teachers, and leaders of young people. Nothing will keep the home fires of spiritual values burning in the lives of youth away at college better than a birthday letter from the pastor or Sunday-school teacher—a letter that burns with the flame of trust, confidence, and faith in the young life and its future if God is a daily companion. Adults appreciate a birthday greeting and its natural conversation in connection with life's goals and ideals. Birthday and wedding anniversaries are special milestones in the lives of most people. It is natural to think of both past and future, memories and dreams. Sorrow and hope are, or may be, combined in the thoughts of this day.

Sometimes letters are more valuable than calls, since things may be written in a letter which are difficult to say in conversation. In one church of about four hundred members fifteen hundred birthday and wedding anniversary dates were accumulated. This made an average of about five per day. The largest number in any one day was thirteen. There were only two days in the year which had none of these special occasions. A box with cards indexed by months with a card for each day of the year is all that is required in addition to the survey card of family names and other data already kept on file.

Sincere pastoral interest in the chief personal problems of parishioners will, in time, wear away adamant hardness. A modern critic has remarked that the greatest weak-

[2] McGarrah, *Modern Church Management*, p. 61. Fleming H. Revell Company, publishers.

ness of the church is its attempt to work in a wholesale instead of a personal manner. The country church still offers the best opportunity for personal evangelism. Country pastors and workers are less distracted with other concerns. They are nearer to the individual lives of people. This advantage must be considered as a part of the country church capital.

Sam Hadley, after thirty years in the Old Bowery Mission, New York, said that he had never known a man who was down and out, to be saved by the love of God, who had not first been won to the friendship of some other man. The best argument to convince any person of the constant and all-comprehending love of God is the constant and all-comprehending love of a fellow man. Even outside of Bowery districts people do not usually find their way into the kingdom of God without some personal help.

Books and special pieces of literature should be placed personally in the hands of the people. Those who should be trained and inspired to personal work should become familiar with Condé's *The Human Element in the Making of a Christian,* and other similar studies. Those whose minds are troubled by problems of faith should be furnished with such books as Fosdick's *The Meaning of Faith* and Rall's *A Working Faith.* Evangelism has too long been thought of as limited to the preaching of revival sermons and the special invitation, personal or public, which is given to people to become Christians. These items of evangelism are just as important as ever, but the cultivation of individual persons is without doubt the greatest need in the average country parish of to-day. The people are reading and thinking more, but talking less, than ever before. The directing of this reading and thinking is an incomparable method of present-day evangelism.

Rural evangelism is primarily the problem of personal contacts, of individual work for individuals. A knowledge of crowd psychology is of far less significance than vital human sympathy—and fortunately more people possess the latter qualification. Even the automobile has not eliminated from rural evangelism the necessity of good legs. We must walk across fields and into barns, always evi-

dencing a learning mind and a loving heart. Dr. Cortland Myers once remarked that the footprints at Plymouth Rock were knee prints. Rural evangelism demands a consciousness that corn fields and haymows are as valuable kneeling spots as Plymouth Rock or the church altar.

The Place of Preaching

Some country churches evidence discouragement and despair concerning the efficiency of the pulpit message. Many preachers are permitting their time to be filled with the details of organization. A twenty-minute sermonette is often urged. Many services are advertised as "including a short sermon." In view of this tendency in the popular thinking no chapter on Evangelism would be complete without special emphasis upon the importance of the preaching message. Restlessness during the sermon is a matter of interest, not of minutes. A clear, timely message of forty-five minutes will seem far shorter to the average mind than a dull, hazy, or platitudinous talk of twenty-five minutes. Protest about sermon length is a challenge to its content. Moreover, great sermons take time. There is much for the laity to do. A live official board and an alert adult Bible class can aid greatly in creating and maintaining opportunity and atmosphere for the completed sermon. The Sunday dinner table comments will also add greatly to the efficacy of the message.

The message of Christianity is threefold; it is a geography of three directions. First is the message about God, directing our thought and conduct toward him. Second is the message about others, directing our thought and conduct toward them. Third is the message about self, directing our personal attitudes and conduct. Who I am, who others are, and who God is, provoke depths of thought and constitute a challenge for speech and conversation incomparably more important than any other themes in the realm of human thinking. Psychology, sociology, and theology are involved. The latest as well as the most ancient thought and history can be brought to bear upon life and its problems with the intensity and power of enthusiasm.

If there is such a thing as "new learning," it must be made the instrument of Christian living. Science and its discoveries are no enemy of Christian thought, but an eternal support and assistance. Science in its most earnest endeavors is attempting to clear the underbrush and establish beaten pathways between the known and the unknown. As science measures the stars, discovers chemical units and develops knowledge of human physiology, soil chemistry and crop fertilization it illustrates and comments upon the life of God in the affairs of man.

Jesus taught the essential unity of all experience. He bridged the chasm between life and death. "Because I live, ye shall live also" is the first positive assurance in all philosophy concerning the unity of the present and the future life. The best that philosophy contained up to the time of Jesus was expressed in the hope of Socrates. Upon drinking the cup of hemlock he turned to Crito and said, somewhat in jest, "May the good gods give me a safe journey over the Styx." The best of philosophy used the verb "may." Jesus did not use the subjunctive or the suppositional. He used the declarative. He said "I live" and "ye shall live." Evangelistic preaching is to-day, as never before, the greatest of arts and the most important of all practical science.

Patience and the Long Look

God is patient. God is ever working. These two thoughts must be kept constantly in mind. About twenty-seven hundred years ago Isaiah started a movement to stop war when he said, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."[3] God has waited nearly two thousand years for man to reap the benefits of the life of Jesus on earth. The fact that he has been patient in waiting for man to learn the more abundant life is one of the most important facts in all Christian theology.

How can the pastor or church worker expect to reap the full benefit of Christian persuasion in two years, the

[3] Isa. 2. 4.

average pastorate? The parent waits twenty years to see results of his teaching, persuasion, and love. God is demanding of every church and of all his workers that they shall do their best and keep persistently at their tasks. The presence of a large foreign group in the community simply makes the task of evangelism more necessary. What of thirty and sixty years hence in that community? Foreigners and native born will be marrying and intermarrying. The old Hebrew reference to our children and our children's children should be kept constantly in the mind of the country church. The conditions under which our grandchildren are to live should demand the heartiest evangelistic effort of all parents.

Books for Reference

Every Church Its Own Evangelist, L. M. Edwards.
Evangelism, F. W. Hannan.
Rural Evangelism, J. E. Wagner.
The Personal Element in the Making of a Christian, Bertha Condé.

For Discussion

1. Name five ways in which this community might carry the message of the church to those who do not attend its services.
2. What are the two best illustrations known to you of fair play in athletics? of honesty in business? of sympathy? of benevolence?
3. How can "no man's land" in this community be disposed of? Just what are its boundaries? Who must be sent to the work?
4. What proportion of a church's evangelistic work should be done by the pastor?
5. How can personal workers be trained?
6. What are the advantages of personal work by teams of at least two? Are there any disadvantages?
7. Should a personal worker see a person in private before urging upon him the invitation at the time of a public altar call? Why?
8. Should a husband and wife be interviewed together about the Christian life? Why?

9. Should a young man be interviewed alone? Why?
10. In urging another to become a Christian, what proportion of the emphasis should be placed upon each of the following factors: his home, his own satisfaction, his influence, his ultimate achievements? What additional factors should be stressed?

But the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, *and* drinketh water of the rain of heaven, a land which Jehovah thy God careth for: The eyes of Jehovah thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. . . . Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; . . . Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your hearts and in your soul; and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, talking of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates; that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children in the land which Jehovah sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of the heavens above the earth. (Deut. 11. 11, 12, 16, 18–21.)

And all thy children shall be taught of Jehovah; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come nigh thee. (Isa. 54. 13, 14.)

He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. (John 21. 15.)

And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. (Mark 9. 42.)

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF COUNTRY CHILDREN

Religious education is rapidly expanding its program. Once thought of as fully comprehended in studying the Bible and catechism, it is now concerned with problems of environment and habit formation as well as class-room instruction. There are a good many things which must accompany a knowledge of the Bible if Christian character is to be assured. This statement seems self evident, but it needs to be reiterated because so often in the popular view religious education includes only Bible knowledge. A more thoughtful analysis of the problems of Christian living makes it clear that while knowledge is significant, it is not the only determiner of character. One of the chief reasons that the Sunday school has lost such large numbers after the beginning of the adolescent period is that the church has not through its Sunday school promoted religious education in its broader aspects.

The country church should rejoice that there is larger promise of developing this wider program among rural people than among urban. In the city it is easier to maintain a school. In the country it is easier to approach the home and to direct the formation of habits. Country ministers have often complained that the country parish is especially limited in its opportunity for religious development. To be sure, regular attendance at church services is more difficult where the roads are bad, or inclement weather interferes, or winter chores are heavy. However, most of us are apt to confuse religious movements with mass movements. From the educational point of view a small gathering is often much more valuable than a large one. It is, we believe, clearly demonstrable that the religious education of country children is less difficult than that of city children.

"By Their Roots"

Jesus once said: "By their fruits ye shall know them"[1] The wisdom of this statement has ever been apparent. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles." We know Christian character in terms of fruitful living. In this chapter, however, we are studying not the fruits of Christian character, but its roots. It was in this connection that one, commenting upon Jesus' words, added: "And by their roots ye must grow them." This statement is a wise educational principle. The importance of roots is becoming well known to agricultural science. Their importance to Christian character must be as carefully studied and become fully appreciated.

The roots of Christian character are essentially the habits, the ideals, the ambitions and the attitudes of early life. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of these factors as roots of character. A practical definition of crime might be: "getting what one wants by wrong means or when one ought not to have it." Crime roots in habits of selfishness and attitudes of indifference to the rights of others. Character values root in the spirit of charity and the attitudes of fraternity. William James said: "But the fact is that our virtues are habits as much as our vices; . . . as we become permanent drunkards by so many separate drinks, so we become saints . . . by so many separate acts and hours of work."[2]

Cultivating Character Soil in the Home

The home determines the roots of character. The task of the church and Sunday school includes assistance and reenforcement to the homes, which must be held responsible for that part of character building which they alone can perform. The church and Sunday school must organize their forces to bring information to the home, to create the sentiments whereby there will develop both family solidarity and community response to the ideals which the home must inculcate, to arouse parents and incite the determination and persistence whereby the program for rooting character shall be accomplished.

[1] Matt. 7. 16.
[2] *Talks to Teachers*, chap. viii. Henry Holt and Company, publishers.

Character requires an atmosphere. The home creates emotional values. What we persistently fear, hate, love, and yearn for is largely due to the emphasis given our thoughts and plans in our youth. Children who go to bed without the good-night prayer and kiss of parents are missing a cultivation of the affectional nature which is of great consequence.

The reading material of the home is also an important factor in the cultivation of character soil. A lad who forged a friend's name on a check was called in to talk the matter over, and in the conversation admitted that there were only seven books in his home and these of no helpful character. In marked contrast, consider the influence of books and magazines upon Theodore Roosevelt's early life, as indicated in his autobiography.

The play equipment of the home is very important. Many times the runaway would never have started, if in addition to reasonable authority there had been sufficient play apparatus at home. Sandpiles, tree-houses, merry-go-rounds, and tools small enough and firm enough to build things, make possible the wholesome day-by-day activities and interests in which character germinates.

The matter of ownership is also significant. Children have learned to steal because the definite line of ownership of their own possessions has never been established. The boy's calf should not become the father's cow. The boy's Christmas toy should not become the family plaything any more than should the father's pocketbook. Social theory in its recent development has been paying a good deal of attention to the acquisitive instinct. What is given to the child belongs to the child and in a measure determines his character.

Feeding the Story Hunger

Another important method of growing character which is particularly adaptable to country home life is the practice of telling stories. "Tell me a 'tory" and "Tell me when 'oose a lil' dirl." How these words ring in the memory of every parent! They represent a universal craving. The child's mind hunger for stories is just as highly specialized and important as his bodily hunger for food.

At no period of the day is the hunger more acute than at the bedtime hour. It is doubtful if any other hour would be as valuable for teaching the lessons of character. Things emphasized just before the hours of sleep are frequently those most easily visualized as the waking hour. The impressions of the bedtime hour are unforgetable. This is an opportunity for the church to emphasize the importance of Bible stories and other stocks of character-building value.

A mother had left her little three-year-old daughter, Pauline, in the room below one afternoon while she spent some time upstairs. When the mother came down, Pauline showed by the anxiety on her face that something had happened. The mother could see nothing wrong. She did not think it wise to take time to go to the kitchen to see what disorder of jams and cookies might be found. Seeking to meet the situation immediately, she asked, with audible tension in her voice, "Why, Pauline, what have you been doing?"

Pauline's lips quivered. Her fingers went into the corner of her mouth. She whimperingly replied, "Mama, I don't want to tell you. I just can't tell you. But, mama, you told us last night at the bedtime story hour about George Washington and the cherry tree, and I just 'spose I must tell you." She then unfolded the details of a hunting expedition. George Washington and his cherry tree, by means of the story, had become instruments for the cultivation of honesty in little Pauline's life. Integrity, courtesy, thrift, and all of the virtues of life may be impressively taught in story form. The stocks of the Bible told and retold for a twenty-minute period at the bedtime-story-hour circle may prove of more value than a college course in biblical literature later in life. Why should a church permit the "Sandman," "Billy Whiskers," "Peter Rabbit," and "Tinker Bell" to usurp the full of the bedtime story hour when it has in its possession the literature of Abraham, Joseph, David, Amos, Jesus, Peter and Paul?

The Companionship of Parents

Edgar A. Guest once wrote an engaging article on "What

I Owe My Father,"[3] but, after all, it emphasized only one thing—the companionship of his father and, through him, of other leading men of the community. The country offers an opportunity for character training through companionship which is not to be found elsewhere. The boy works with his father, the girl with her mother. The story of sex and mating life are an open book in the country, a story illustrated in the life of flowers and birds, fowls and animals. The church will do well to urge upon parents full responsibility at this point. There is no substitute for fathers and mothers in giving this instruction. Sunday-school classes, young people's societies, and other organizations within the church can fully implant their ideals and prayers in the lives of those children only whose relationship to the sex life has been one of truth, purity, and knowledge. Moreover, with the increased facilities for social and group gatherings, and for constant interrelationships between boys and girls, the importance of parental companionship with children dare not be overlooked.

The inexorable laws of frost and death, sunshine and growth, are likewise a constant illustration of religious truth to country parents and children. Day after day, season after season, year after year illustrations of the beauty and significance of law are present. From the little bird in the egg, from the changes of leaf and blossom and flower, these lessons are at hand and awaiting the illumination of the Christian parent-teacher.

The Care of Animals and Pets

There are possibilities of vital character training in a child's care for animals. This was brought out very clearly by a sociologist's survey made in a penitentiary. He discovered that nine tenths of the inmates had never had pets when children. This large percentage certainly indicates a cause of great significance. The feeding and care of the pet develops in the child the same tender emotion as is developed by the parent in caring for the child. An acquaintance recently recited this experience. Her little boy Thomas owned a Scotch collie. Its name was

[3] *American Magazine*, January, 1920.

Scotty. Thomas said to his mother one day, "Mama, I love Scotty more than I do you." At first the mother was quite shocked. She told Thomas that if Scotty were to die, she would still put him to bed, say his prayers with him, turn out the light, and the next morning she would get his breakfast; but if she died, what could Scotty do for him? Thomas replied: "Oh, I know mama, I need you more than I need Scotty; but I was talking about love. I love Scotty more than I love you."

After all, there is nothing harsh or unnatural in the child's attitude in this incident. Thomas had been given the complete care of the dog. It was his task to feed him, or Scotty was not fed. He had to care for him at night or he was not cared for. The very life of the dog had depended upon Thomas and the development of tender emotion with him was as definite as the development of tender emotion in the heart of the mother upon whom the life of Thomas had depended.

Pets are even more valuable than gardens, because there is stronger reaction from unjust treatment. Both suffer, but the dog will bite, the colt will kick; while the flower or vegetable in the garden only withers silently when care is not given. Regularity of habit is also established in a more valuable way in caring for pets; for with a little harder work weeds may be pulled to-morrow or the next day, but animals suffer and die if they are not cared for regularly.

Such factors may seem far removed from the usual plans of religious education. But if the church means by religious education the development of spiritual characteristics and the formation of habits and tendencies which make for character, then it must be granted that the country church has undeveloped resources and opportunities along many of these lines.

Sunday in the Home

The country church is battling against two very serious situations in connection with Sunday. One is that country people are quite universally spending late Saturday nights in nearby towns with a consequent late Sunday morning start at choring. The other is the custom of

making long journeys by auto and having big feast-day dinners with relatives or friends. The entire problem can be solved only by the reshaping of popular sentiment and thought. This is an integral part of the religious educational task. A new idea of Sunday and its significance must be created. Sunday is not merely a day to go to church or to refrain from going; it is not a day which permits of a minimum of worship and a maximum of questionable recreations. It is a day set apart for worship, refreshment, and spiritual enlightenment; in short, it is a religious educational day. The best simple and yet practical material for assisting parents in happy ways of observing Sunday is contained in two pamphlets entitled *How to Spend Sunday* and *Sunday in the Home*.[4]

The Vacation Church School

This movement is growing with great rapidity. These schools usually start soon after the close of the public school and run for from three to six weeks. The sessions occupy the forenoons. A variety of subjects are taught in a regular curriculum with recitation periods from 20 to 40 minutes in length. Some of the subjects taught in the different grades are: Bible, music—including the memorization of hymns—missionary lands and people, worship, pageantry, and Bible dramatization, hand crafts, nature lore, Christian literature, church history, and Christian citizenship. These are all correlated with each other and with periods of supervised play.

A great deal is being said about the Bible, its literature and history, as courses which should be taught in the public school. The sentiment seems to be rapidly advancing in favor of accepting this work as credit courses in the public-school curriculum. We believe that this should be done; however, the curriculum is not yet well enough defined. It would seem that the highest service that the church can render is to demonstrate in these vacation schools what the church can do in the field of religious education before insisting upon work in public schools. Everywhere there is a demand for something more than the brief Sunday-school period for religious

[4] *The American Home Series*, The Abingdon Press.

training. The church should challenge its membership to test out new enterprises and to demonstrate untried possibilities. The field is open for original work. The religious world is anxiously waiting for everything which anyone can suggest and do. In developing the vacation church school the country church will have the difficulties of transportation of farm children to overcome. However, the same difficulties are being rapidly overcome in the transportation of pupils to the public school. A sentiment that the religious school is a necessity will furnish like assistance in solving the problem. In New England, especially, some very valuable work is being done in rural neighborhoods where groups of children are gathered in farm homes.[5]

Training Parents for the Christian Home

Parenthood is the most significant responsibility which the individual faces in life. As one views our rather elaborate system of education from the primary grades to specialized university work, he is amazed to find that in it little or no training is given for parenthood. Probably no one demand of the public in connection with our educational system is greater than that high schools should include courses in the care, feeding, and moral nurture of infants and children. The forces working toward this achievement, however, cannot be set in motion to care adequately for the situation for a number of years. Meanwhile volunteer study clubs must be organized. A good many churches already have a young married people's class, or kindred groupings of young married people. These should constitute the basis of an organization for the study of child care and training. The literature upon this theme is increasing rapidly.[6] A series of textbooks under the title "The Parent Training Series" of which the introductory manual is *Parents and Their Children*, Moxcey and Ward, is now available.[7] The Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor is publishing a choice list of material in this field. Some typical themes

[5] Correspond with Professor M. A. Dawber, Boston University, Boston, Mass.
[6] Write W. C. T. U., Child Welfare Bureau at Washington.
[7] The Methodist Book Concern.

of the American Home Series[8] are *The Government of Young Children, How to Deal With Problems of Temper, How One Real Mother Lives With Her Children, A Year of Good Sundays,* etc. A valuable introductory manual is also published.

The group study of problems of parenthood aids greatly in the solution of neighborhood problems. One sometimes thinks that the old adage, "Love is blind" is more true in the relation between parent and child than in marital love. Group study aids each parent in the observation of his own child and greatly facilitates friendly discussions between parents concerning each other's difficulties. The very fact that they are studying together makes them less critical of each other's faults and more sympathetic with each other's problems. This larger sympathy is very often an aid in the solution of delicate situations. There are few single items of the church's service which are more significant than the assistance which it may give in the organization and conduct of classes and study courses for Christian parenthood.

Books for Reference

American Home Series, 38 pamphlets, Norman E. Richardson, Editor.
Religious Education in the Family, H. F. Cope.
Training the Boy, W. A. McKeever.
Training the Girl, W. A. McKeever.
Parents and Their Children, M. E. Moxcey-D. K. Ward.
Tell Me a True Story, Mary Stewart.

For Discussion

1. Name the elements other than knowledge of the Bible which you feel are essential for Christian character.
2. If the home determines the "roots of character," why do wrecks come from some apparently good homes?
3. To what extent are the emotions of love, sympathy, and fraternity subject to training?
4. Do parents usually want more books in the home?

[8] The Abingdon Press. Thirty-eight pamphlets of this series are now available, costing from 15 to 25 cents each.

What is the effect of uncertainty as to which are the best when trying to purchase books?

5. What methods might the church use to inform parents concerning "best books"?

6. What is wrong when a mother has time to put frosting on cookies, but no time for bedtime stories?

7. How does companionship of parents often save the children to their best?

8. Should "parent training" plans include fathers, or mothers only?

9. Do you agree with the writer that pets are better than gardens for character training? Why?

And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2. 52.)

I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one. (1 John 2. 14.)

Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah; and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. (Deut. 6. 4–7.)

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Phil. 4. 8.)

CHAPTER VI

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF COUNTRY YOUTH

A CHURCH in Wisconsin kept a careful record covering twenty years, which shows that two hundred and sixteen young people, responding to the program of evangelism, had come to its altars and joined its membership. Only six per cent, however, remained true to the pledges made. To have given a moment of vision and a brief inspiration to two hundred and sixteen young people and then to have lost relationship with two hundred and three of them is a real tragedy. These figures may represent an extreme situation, but to the student of church statistics it will seem all too typical.

YOUTH OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

When we begin to study population figures we discover that the larger proportion of youth in the average community is not reached by the church. More than half are not in Sunday school or young people's societies. They do not attend church services, are not actively engaged in the social and recreational program of the church, and are not contributing in any way to its financial or social support. One is amazed and shocked at the numbers of young men found in pool halls and restaurants or driving aimlessly about in automobiles at the very moment when church banquets and social programs for young people are in progress, to say nothing of still greater numbers absent when a devotional meeting is being held.

Again, a large number are influenced by, or related to, the church in childhood but are not held by the church during the period of youth. At about twelve to fourteen they cease to attend Sunday school and only in small numbers are affiliated with Epworth League or Christian Endeavor activities. Those who remain are usually those

whose parents have likewise been constant in Sunday school and church relationships.

Furthermore, a large proportion of those who are held by the church are not trained in Christian vision and outlook. Much evidence goes to show that Christianity has never been effectively taught or even clearly presented to the mass of church members, to say nothing of the mass of the people at large. "If there is any one point upon which the chaplains agree, it is in regard to the widespread ignorance as to the meaning of Christianity. . . . We might well hope that in a 'Christian' country, men generally, even those without any allegiance to Christ or his church, would know what Christianity is. Chaplains say that they do not know. And they go beyond that and say that men nominally within the church, men who have been to Christian schools, are in much the same condition. The church as a teacher has failed to instruct its own membership."[1]

The study program of the church has not been stressed. The popular sentiment of Christian thought has not been brought to bear upon the need and scope of a study program. Just before the election in 1922 a group of thirty-three young people were asked to show hands if they understood what was meant by a reference to the Volstead Act. Three hands went up. They were then asked if they understood what was meant by a reference to the "Whiskey Rebellion" under Washington. Twenty hands went up. Whether wholly typical or not, this indicates that the assignment of history has been taken seriously in our public schools, but that moral and ethical problems demanding careful study in everyday life are not taken seriously.

Restraining Influence Needed

Nothing can be more dangerous to character than the unrestrained pursuit of inclination. Our wills must be trained to master our desires. The present-day moral breakdown is due to freedom of action and liberalism in conduct, without guiding ideals. The child learns in life

[1] Ellwood, *The Reconstruction of Religion*, p. 287. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

that fire burns; a very emphatic negative is thus effected. The same kind of negative and limiting restraints must be enforced in moral and social behavior, before progress can be made in religious development. Hence, parental control is a vital part of the program of religious education.

Parental companionships are the most vital force in encouraging as well as in restraining youth. The church has shown a hopeful tendency in developing Father and Son, and Mother and Daughter banquets. The importance of this movement lies far beyond that of a pleasant additional church activity. The deep-lying significance of these banquets is in the movement for more and wider companionships. Baseball games have been observed where the presence of parents or Christian leaders on the sidelines has restrained boys from swearing and quarreling about the umpire's decisions. Oftentimes fathers are busy trying to make money to send their boys to college when a bit of companionship would have given the ideals for college life that are of infinitely more worth than the money which would pay the way.

Community standards must, in part at least, parallel church standards. The church cannot maintain a restraining influence within any community in which popular and public sentiment run counter to its ideals. This is a difficult matter both in discusion and in practice. The point of practical emphasis is that the church must build up community restraints by the educational method. Public opinion does not descend by a miracle, nor does it arise in response to sermons alone. It grows like a tree and must be watered and cultivated. For instance, the growing contempt for law, order and decency is increased by late hours and long distances from home. Their effect is quite similar to that of liquor! They break down both muscular and nervous resistance. Restraints can be built up only by a most careful educational process. Statistics must be compiled, propaganda must be carried on, valiant service from young people themselves must be enlisted. High-school classes and other groups must pledge each other to remain true to accepted standards. Vital religious education cannot be carried on until these things are done.

The neighborhood and community must be made safe for religious and spiritual development.

Religious Education Through Reading Material

The program of furnishing adequate literature for childhood must be continued in the period of youth. Reasonable restraint in the use of an automobile must be accompanied by the provision of other interests and resources to occupy adequately the leisure time. Surveys of country homes throughout entire communities reveal a scarcity of books which is depressing. The church and Sunday school must be just as much concerned about the books and literature which are to be put into the hands of youth during the week as about the use of graded lesson material on Sunday. The church should provide lists of the best books. These lists should be compiled, in part at least, by the members of the church or others residing in the community. It means much more to have a book recommended by a friend than by someone unknown, even though the unknown personage is a far greater scholar. The Boy Scout handbook contains a list of the best books for boys. Every library has lists of best books. The Department of Religious Education of Northwestern University has a little booklet entitled "Young Folks Directory," which may be purchased for twenty-five cents, which lists good books, classified according to age.

Not only must the church recognize this opportunity and suggest books, but it must add every incentive possible to the reading of books and to the discussion of the material in them. The "Minute Men" idea carried out during the war might well be adapted for these peace time purposes. Young people should be used in the pulpit in giving brief book reviews and arguments for the choice of the better literature. Prizes may be awarded for both the largest amount read and the best reports. The local newspapers can be enlisted in printing these reviews and reports. These papers are usually heartily glad to use material furnished by home folks, and young people are greatly encouraged by "appearing in print."

Modern youth is accustomed to a school program full of activity, and contest work. A Bible story contest

movement has been inaugurated which suggests a program of this type that might be greatly expanded. It is patterned after the high-school declamatory contest, familiar in the public-school system. Three classes of contest material are recognized: the narrative Bible story, the dramatic, and the memorized Bible selection. Young people of high-school age are enlisted in the contest and choose the material according to individual talent. Winners in each class are then sent to a contest between a group of churches, from which the winners are sent to a contest with winners in other groups. This can be carried on to the highest point of the church's organization.[2] It depends upon the sympathetic Christian leadership to see that the contests themselves are "clean sport," cultivating friendly acquaintance rather than jealous and unkind rivalries.

Religious Education Through Dramatization

The educational method demands an increase of expressional opportunities. Since the decay of her testimony meeting, the Protestant Church has not recognized sufficiently the importance of expressional phases of religious life. Fast days have degenerated into days of feasting and fast living. Holy days have become holidays. Kneeling in prayer has been practically eliminated. There is nowhere the definite and distinctive activity on the part of the individual whereby he shows himself to the community and to his fellow Christians as definitely and personally employed in expressing his inner religious sentiments and purposes. Corrective movements must be set in motion. Of course we do not yet see what all of these may be, but we shall learn new methods as we proceed. Integrity, courtesy, reverence, and all Christian virtues must be learned through symbol, imitation, and the practice of the arts of living.

The most important thing is that a start must be made in expressional activities. In this connection the value of dramatization cannot be overemphasized. No one who has visited Oberammergau, where the Passion Play is repro-

[2] For fuller details write Earl A. Roadman, Fayette, Iowa.

duced every ten years, can doubt the tremendous significance of the dramatization of an ideal and of the specific characters embodied in that ideal. In assuming the rôle of a great character of history, youth is challenged to a new kind of thinking and activity. Professor Stevick, of Morningside College, reports that a boy who was the chief problem in his community was aroused and directed into the Christian ministry by taking the part of Job in a dramatization of that remarkable piece of literature.

Christian Bible dramatization is in its infancy. No one can deny that serious dangers are involved. Every good movement is likewise in danger; religious dramatization is not alone in that respect. The Bible has been held in a separate and sacred category. Putting its characters upon the platform may tend to make them seem common and vulgar, and careless treatment of scenes and characters is indeed a very serious matter. The popularity of dramatic work tends to emphasize theatrical above educational ends. Using dramatization too frequently tends to make the participants tire of both the method and the message. But when all dangers are carefully noted and safeguarded, a constructive program can be built which will be of immeasurable value to the Christian church.

One of the simple forms, available to every church, is that of monologue impersonations. A single character of the Bible—Miriam, Amos, Elijah, Paul, or Timothy—may appear in costume and give a message characteristic of the individual represented. This message may be one memorized from the Bible or a statement in modern words of the type of message given by the character in that ancient day. In the same way characters from mission fields may present their message and their appeal. From simple single characterization, advance may be made to more complex scenes and complicated episodes.

It must always be kept in mind, however, that the object is educational and not theatrical. Certainly, colored lights and costumes true to the age in which the scenes took place should be used; but aping the modern theater will be disastrous. We are not concerned about a program which will fill the church. This may or may not be the result. We are utilizing a method of religious educa-

tion—a method of Bible and mission study. We are insisting that expressional opportunities for youth include dramatization and characterization of Bible characters as valuable factors. They should be used in and by the Sunday-school classes for expressional ends and not for demonstration or entertainment purposes.

Organization of Religious Educational Value

It is essential that youth should organize. This is particularly the age of the gang, the team, the troop, and its psychology naturally suggests that it is absolutely necessary to organize the Sunday-school class. Such organization requires officers who have position and rank within the group. It develops leadership and teaches cooperative citizenship.

Initiation into the class, ritual, and ceremony are all very important items. Naturally, rites and observances should be symbolical of the meaning of Christianity. Initiation of a hazing type is mere rowdyism, but a ceremony which symbolizes truth and light, friendship and loyalty will be both interesting and challenging. The use of fire and light, handclasps, dignified phraseology, music, and some definite deed conditioning gang and group membership is found among all ages and conditions of people. Every lodge member recognizes the important part played by these factors in the initiation and ritualistic ceremonies. Let Sunday-school classes, Epworth Leagues, and all Christian organizations of youth profit by these universal requisites, and make their initiation and ritual more formal and more beautifully symbolized.

The utilization within the church of the Boy and Girl Scout troops, the Pioneers and Knights of King Arthur, the Camp Fire and Girl Reserves, or other national organizations is a most valuable, and as yet little developed, phase of religious education. The programs of these organizations train the muscles and nerves in corrective habits. They call for hard work and intense training. They employ vast areas of leisure time. In many communities they have failed, but failure has always been due to inefficient leadership and a lack of church and community support. Frequently they have been started by leaders

who were not in harmony with the church, and the church has objected to the competition. The fault which the church should have recognized is its own failure to organize this work within its own circle.

Beyond the Local Boundaries

Epworth League institutes, State and county Older Boys' and Girls' conferences and other groupings of intercommunity religious work are developing programs rapidly. The church has a large opportunity to reap benefits from these organizations. They widen the acquaintanceship of young people who are impressed by the large number of other young people who with them are struggling for better things. Too frequently one is depressed by the small numbers within his own community. This association beyond his own horizon adds to his enthusiasm and strengthens his own ideals.

No one will deny that dangers attend this intercommunity religious educational work. The "going-somewhere" habit is a serious one. Very frequently young people return from an Epworth League institute only to await with impatience the arrival of the next one. Those who are sent to these distant gatherings must be made responsible for inaugurating new movements and developing locally the enthusiasm engendered by the larger gathering. The chaperonage of the local group away from home is an important item. Too often, parents and community leaders have thought themselves too busy to accompany their own young folk. Just as a parent is never too busy to give adequate care to his sick child, we must realize that we are never too busy to care adequately for endangered morals.

The program of these District and State gatherings must also be carefully guarded. It should never run into a riot of entertainment, but should be built upon the needs of the local churches. The young people should never be permitted to feel that they come from one of these larger meetings as from a mountaintop experience into nothing but a deep, dark valley at home. Our home community is the fruitful plain of realization where experiences may be deepened by deeds of service. "Inasmuch as ye have

done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Books for Reference

Pageantry and Dramatics in Religious Education, W. V. Meredith.

The Dramatization of Bible Stories, E. E. Miller.

The Boy and His Gang, J. A. Puffer.

The Organization and Administration of Religious Education, J. E. Stout.

For Discussion

1. Why have so many young people, who were formerly in its Sunday schools, been lost from the church?
2. Why are so few young folks brought into the church who have never been in its Sunday school or had a part in its work?
3. How many boys in your acquaintanceship have disappointed the fathers who have maintained close companionships with them?
4. Do "good times" for young people demand late hours?
5. Definitely name four restrictions which should be placed upon modern activities.
6. Let the class agree upon five of the best books for young people. Suggest at least ten others which should be read.
7. State fully all of the values and all of the dangers you see in Bible characterization and dramatization.
8. Why have so many Scout troops and Camp Fires discontinued? What should be done about it?
9. Name four good reasons for sending a delegation to an Epworth League institute.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God. (Exod. 20. 8, 9, 10.)

Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones, and thy sojourner that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear Jehovah your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children, who have not known, may hear, and learn to fear Jehovah your God, as long as ye live in the land. . . . (Deut. 31. 12, 13.)

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. (Luke 4. 16.)

And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: so that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath. (Mark 2. 27, 28.)

And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. (Acts 16. 13.)

As for man, his days are as grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone;
And the place thereof shall know it no more.
But the loving-kindness of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him,
And his righteousness unto children's children;
To such as keep his covenant,
And to those that remember his precepts to do them.
Jehovah has established his throne in the heavens;
And his kingdom ruleth over all.
Bless Jehovah, ye his angels,
That are mighty in strength, that fulfill his word,
Hearkening unto the voice of his word.
Bless Jehovah, all ye his hosts,
Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
Bless Jehovah, all ye his works,
In all places of his dominion:
Bless Jehovah, O my soul. (Psa. 103. 15–22.)

CHAPTER VII

SERVICES OF WORSHIP

The amount of travel to-day is an indication of deep wistfulness and yearning. No one can deny that country people no longer remain at home. They are all going somewhere a portion of the time and they are going to those places where an appeal is being made to their emotional natures. They may not be finding truth, but they are, consciously or unconsciously, in search of it. The country church may well decide that automobiles can *take to* as well as *away from* the church services and proceed so to plan the services that this yearning may be satisfied.

Wistfulness is ever present at Camp Fire scenes, at Epworth League assemblies, and at those unique occasions of Older Boys' or Girls' Conferences and conventions when young people are gathered in groups surcharged with the Christian atmosphere. Once sixty-five Boy Scouts seated about a banquet table were asked to indicate by a show of hands how many of them had thought, dreamed, and prayed in varying degrees about becoming good men. Sixty-five hands went up without hesitation. One who cares and searches for it is always amazed at the universality of this wistfulness. The challenge to the church is to translate and transform it into religious life and power. The challenge to the country church is not different from that to the city church, but it simply must face its own task. It must work in its own field for its own people. Its religious services must furnish a faith and certainty in God and in human relations whereby human and divine companionships are cemented, and all life is raised from temporary to timeless significance.

Building the Worshiping Congregation

A truly worshipful congregation is the desire of every church, but it can result only from earnest and continuous

efforts. Worship requires more than people in the pews and a pastor in the pulpit. Worship requires friendships and brotherhood. People cannot worship together who do not work together. Unified interests and energized sentiments compel people to unite in prayer and praise. Therefore every church wants a congregation rather than a crowd. There is much difference between them. A crowd is unorganized, while a congregation is a working unit. A crowd is without influence, a congregation creates public opinion. The majority in a crowd are strangers to each other's deeper interests, while in the congregation the majority are friends with unity of sentiments and purpose. The crowd may enjoy a message, but only the congregation can enjoin it upon community life. Thus a crowd can express a want, but only a congregation will worship.

The country church must therefore emphasize the religious importance of neighboring and laboring together. Grain "threshing rings," school-district projects, and community recreation endeavors have within them the very foundations of fraternity and brotherhood which are essential to the worshiping congregation.

John Wesley's first work was not in building churches and filling them. He began by arousing the religious interests among people in their homes, among the colliers and working people in their places of labor. As a result of the large interest aroused, church buildings had to be built. Likewise the church to-day can be filled only by going out and ministering to people in their daily needs and arousing those common and daily interests in religion which will bring them into the church for worship. Such a congregation can be built only by pastor and people working together. They must share a sympathetic interest in temporary concerns and a consuming interest in immortal souls. They must share the long look whereby the efforts of to-day are seen in their results to-morrow.

The Preaching and Teaching Message

Country people are naturally worshipful, and the worshiping service must be the natural appeal to their experience. Sermons and lessons dare not deal exclusively with

dogma or historical theology. Nature's lessons and life are everywhere abundant and should be used. Amos found effective use of the actions of locusts, mildew, and palmer worm. He taught the national dangers of eating lambs out of the flock and calves out of the stall. Jesus' use of rural figures is an example for both teacher and preacher. With charming ease he teaches the most significant lessons through his use of animals and fowls, including the hen, chickens, cock, sparrow, eagle, ox, ass, colt, sheep, goats, swine, and foxes. He talks of wheat, corn, grass, vine, seeds, mustard, trees, grapes, thorns, thistles, figs, olives, and lilies; while field, hedge, highway, garnering bin, bushel, plow, reaping, sowing, and grinding take their respective places in his picturesque phraseology.

High-school students will find it a delightful piece of research in English or in rural sociology to reproduce for the Sunday-school class references in the poetry of different periods to fields and fowls and to the activities of farming.

These worshiping services in the church ought to be, in part at least, analogous to beautiful home gatherings. Thanksgiving at grandmother's, with home folks and kin gathered together talking about dreams of the future and memories of the past, is not unlike the meaning and significance of the worshiping services. The preaching and teaching messages of these services ought to be, and can be, filled with the warmth of love and personal experience which make them both spiritually satisfying and mentally attractive.

The Message of Music

Good music is an aid and poor music an abomination in the service of worship. We refer not to the art of singing but to the content of the music. Nor do we mean that music must be difficult. Some of the most beautiful music is simple. That music in the worshiping service is best in which it is possible for all to participate. We need congregational singing and a congregational director. The popular demand must become so widespread that our colleges and training centers will be compelled to train a leadership for church and community music.

People sang during the World War. They enjoyed singing. A type of music grew out of the experience of the day, the content of which was valuable though not classic. This kind of musical endeavor should be the ideal for our Christian congregational effort. This was the type of the Wesleyan music. The colliers of England, brought under the influence of Wesley's sermons and of the class meeting, sang the music of faith and hope and inspiration which was native to the experience through which they were passing. They did not have books or instruments, but they made music. Such also is the music of the Negro spirituals. Church music must come from the heart.

The Ritualistic Service

Ritualistic services have a special appeal. Their use by fraternal organizations among adults and by the rapidly developing Boy Scout and Camp Fire Girl programs among youth must be a challenging suggestion to the church. When their content symbolizes the truths and ideals which the organization is attempting to teach and preach there is no danger of a lack of appreciation. The Christian man who thinks about the situation must be amazed at the poverty and thinness of the content of much of the worship of the country church when contrasted with the wealth of ritualistic symbol and form used by other rural organizations. Nothing should be overdone, but a great deal is being left undone.

No church need break with the forms prescribed by its denominational leadership, but every local church may contribute some special features of its own. These should be developed through the cooperation of those people in the community who love art. A church may greatly enrich its order of service by enlisting the suggestions of a committee including music lovers, the chief officers of some of the fraternal organizations who are interested in the religious service, dramatists or public speakers, and leaders of boys' and girls' work who are qualified to offer such suggestions. There will be much value in that specific ritualistic contribution which originates within the local congregation.

The Evening Service

There is a general agreement that the more formal ritualistic service should be in the morning. In the evening, varied service is desirable. The variety, of course, must be within the realm of religious appeal and not outside of it. It may be offered in the music, with antiphonal singing. A group of the choir may sit in the rear, or opposite the remaining members. The responsive singing between the two groups adds interest and meaning. Variety may be in the form of Bible characterization or dramatization, as discussed more at length in Chapters V and VI. The variety in the service which is furnished by the people of the church is of more permanent value than lantern slides or movie films. The message given by these groups, the character values arising through training for the programs, and the development of talent, constitute values beyond passive spectatorship of picture and drama.

However, both the stereopticon and the movie machine should be used, whether frequently or infrequently according to the honest judgment of the church's leadership. The informational and educational value of the screen and its appeal to the eye is of great significance. "Am I my brother's keeper?" can be answered only in terms of who my brother is. The screen presents an opportunity of seeing our brothers in every race, of every color, and in almost every condition of life. Thus the missionary education made possible by the screen which teaches us the facts and the need of brotherhood throughout the world becomes an important phase of worship and adds to the variety of the church's appeal.

Special features should be a supplement to, and not a substitute for, the spoken message. The fifteen- or twenty-minute sermon, with its appeal to the will and to the heart to carry out in Christ's name and with his spirit the message and intent of the information given in the special service, is always essential.

Out-of-Door Services

"And ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus' reply was, "God is a spirit and

they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." In groves, around camp fires, on river banks, on the ice at the top of the coasting hill, and at special outdoor assemblies, we must establish shrines of worship. Though these shrines may be temporary in time and place, they are permanent in their relationship to character. Infrequently country services on a hot Sunday should be moved without previous notice to a near-by farmhouse lawn. Of course many outdoor services should be planned with previous announcement and with the intention of gathering the entire country side.

The following account from the Rev. John W. Mettam, of Money Creek (Postoffice, Houston), Minnesota, tells its own clear story:

"For three summers we have held outdoor Sunday evening services, during July and August, on the lawns of various farm homes, scattered all over the circuit.

"For the past two summers we have done some pageantry work in connection. The pageants used were 'The Triumph of Peace,' 'The Challenge of the Cross,' 'The Good Samaritan,' and 'The Ten Virgins.' Ours is only a small community, but when the young people put on their pageants and musicals, over five hundred people will be out to the service.

"It must not be thought that this is just a religious show. The devotional and worship side is always put first. It is a good thing for the young people taking part too. They find a real place of usefulness on this occasion. The lessons are driven home to the hearts of the people in so vivid a way that they cannot easily be forgotten.

"Our opening service last summer was largely musical. The McKinley choir from Winona (twenty miles distant) came out and sang with the local chorus. A pasture with two small hills was selected, one choir being placed on each hill. They sang a number of pieces antiphonally. Afterward they were brought together and finished the service with the 'Hallelujah Chorus.'

"When we compare the numbers who attend our lawn services with the few who would ordinarily attend our little church on Sunday evenings in summer, and also the

good influence of the meetings on the community, it seems to us very much worth while."

To look into the faces of a group of boys or girls or young people around the camp fire or across a babbling stream in moonlight hours, and speak to them about the friendship of the Master and the eternal truths of life, is to assure an attainment of faith and hope in the life of youth. The speaker who has had this experience can never be persuaded that young people do not like sermons or religious addresses. They do, and they also like them at least once in a while in the midst of romantic scenes and nature's beauty spots. A circle of prayer on the ice or on the bank of a lake with lights of a distant city shimmering on the water makes an unforgetable scene. Devotionals in such places bring the experience of companionship with a personal Father.

Festivals and Special Days

Natural decorations available to the country church for special occasions are beyond comparison with the hothouse plants and flowers of city churches. Sometimes we hear the suggestion that country people do not have time to gather these flowers. But where is there a child who has not spent hours in a prodigal gathering of these clusters of beauty? Primary and junior classes will gather them and it is worth anyone's time to arrange them. The autumn offers an incomparable opportunity for decorating with vegetables, fruits, and grain. The custom of a Harvest Home in country churches is growing. For this festival, one church decorated in this way: A tall stalk of corn was placed at every window casing and at the entrance to every pew. Fruit and vegetables were clustered in abundance around the altar. A bulging horn of plenty stood at one side. Back of the pulpit was a gorgeous grape arbor. A few plain rustic benches were placed in the rear. It was altogether a wonderful scene. One of the merchants who cared for his own window decoration had been placed in charge and gladly supervised the work of decorating the church.

The special appeal of such days and events is universal. Spiritual inspiration resides in such scenes of natural

beauty, arranged by human art. The depths of the human soul are laid open. The spoken message is sealed by new fires of interest, and remembered because of the unforgetable associations.

Books for Reference

A Manual for Training in Worship, Hugh Hartshorne.
The Building of the Church, C. E. Jefferson.
Good Ministers of Jesus Christ, W. F. McDowell.

For Discussion

1. What evidence has come to your attention that people have a fundamental desire to be good?
2. What forms of worship mean most to youth between twelve and seventeen? On what do you base your answer?
3. What forms of worship mean most to young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four?
4. What locations in this community are best for different kinds of outdoor services?
5. What special days were observed in your church services last year?
6. What special day services should be included in this year's calendar?
7. Should the opening service of the Epworth League be different from that of the church service? Why?
8. What Bible characters could be portrayed as a part of an effective service of worship?
9. Why does the church use so few of its people in the services of worship? Should it use more?
10. To what extent does undeveloped talent menace character?

Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6. 6–8.)

And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (Isa. 2. 3, 4.)

And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. (Genesis 4. 9, 10.)

Now the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. (Jonah 1. 1, 2.)

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd. (John 10. 16.)

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. (Matt. 28. 19, 20.)

CHAPTER VIII

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND WORLD MISSIONS

No single factor promises larger returns in enthusiasm, loyalty, and the development of religious interests within a church than emphasis upon world missions. This is due both to the theory and practice of Christianity. The essential message of Christianity has to do with God, with others, and with self. This might be considered the perfect triangle of the Christian life. Christian living is not possible without clear thinking and consistent practices in harmony with the highest thoughts and appreciations about God, about others, and about self.

The Importance of Mission Interest

The missionary interests of the world are built about the Christian theory and practice of relationships with others. In the Hebrew Scriptures the writer did not get far in rehearsing the beginnings of life until the question "Am I my brother's keeper?" literally spilled itself across the pages. It is a scarlet thread running through all Bible and Christian history. It appears again and again: "Am I my brother's keeper?" "Am I my brother's keeper?" It is answered again and again by psalmist, by prophet, by historian, by Jesus, and by the missionary apostles. "I am my brother's keeper," "I am my brother's keeper." The scope of missionary geography, facts of missionary history, progress of missionary education, development of missionary medicine, and courageous achievements of missionary folks are modern "acts of the apostles." No Christian of to-day can be consistently called a Christian who disclaims interest in missions. Mission service and mission deeds are the attempts of the church to affirm the answer "I am my brother's keeper." The results are to be found in every country, in every place, in work for people of every color and of every race, "where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian,

Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all." The work of the modern church, city and country, must vindicate the statement of Paul.

An Index Finger Pointing

A Chinese lad in an American boys' school in New England was ever pointing his finger at American boys, when they did that which was inconsistent with a profession of the Christian life. Though proud of the fact that he was not a Christian, he would point his index finger at American boys and say, "You don't dare do that, you are Chreestian." Although he was unwilling to be a Christian himself, he saw what Christianity meant. He knew Christian ideals and recognized that America, claiming to be Christian, was challenged to the task of exemplifying the Christian life.

This is the attitude and the quest of the foreign world to-day. Its index finger is pointed at America. The greatest Christian service which America can render to the world is, after all, not in sending its missionaries, but in living the Christian life. The world press, world cables, world radio, world trade, and world politics are furnishing the records which are being read by the world. By these methods the world learns to know and judge America. The things which American missionaries say about God, humanity, and individuality, must be proved by the things which Christian men do in their home service, which so easily becomes a part of the world record.

Accelerating Progress

Everywhere we hear it repeated that "It will be a long time until the brotherhood of man can be established." "It will be a long time until the world can exist without war." "It will be a long time until Christian ideals can adequately determine economic relationships." This is all a serious mistake. Time is a minor factor. The coming of the Kingdom in the larger way does not await the passage of time, but it requires intensity of interest and motive.

It has not taken long to furnish automobile service to America. It has not taken long to develop the ideal of

universal education. The world outcry against slavery accomplished its object within an amazingly brief period of time. The slogan of a decade and a half ago, "The evangelization of the world in this generation," was not a far cry nor a foolish generalization. It was the statement of a realizable ideal. It was the conviction born of the Spirit of God. If the leadership of the churches had joined more heartily with that great Paul-like evangelist, John R. Mott, the ideal could have been measurably accomplished within a generation.

Agricultural Missions

An increasing factor in modern missionary programs is the emphasis upon agricultural missions. Close to three fourths of the population of the earth is rural, actually living in the country. In foreign countries more than in America the great majorities of people live upon the land and are directly dependent upon agriculture. A student of agricultural engineering at an American college left his home in the Philippine Islands intending to come to America as a student of commerce. Traveling through China, Japan, and other countries of the Orient on his way to America, he became so impressed with the need of agricultural improvement throughout the world that he changed his purpose, and in Christian consecration and dedication of life he determined to study agricultural engineering. Better farming is, indeed, a great need of America, but it is an even greater need of the world. To intensify the interest of the American country church in world agricultural improvement—an improvement affecting nearly three quarters of the population of the earth—certainly is an aim which ought to challenge the life and virility of American country youth.

The recent establishment of farm experiment stations in foreign countries is another item of significance. A farm of nearly sixteen thousand acres known as the Bunster farm, on the western coast of South America at Angol, Chile, was purchased and is being operated by the Methodist Centenary movement. Every country church should read some of the letters which are being written by the manager of this farm, revealing both the needs and the

opportunities of the marvelous service which is being inaugurated.

Likewise the more intensive cultivation of religious life within agricultural colleges and university centers is of increasing significance. Student pastorates and church foundation movements at the seat of these institutions have rapidly increased during the past decade. In these institutions rural sociology and rural Christian leadership are being taught and emphasized with large promise for deepening the students' interest in rural phases of the world missionary program.

This same service is also being developed within many of the colleges. Rural leadership departments have already been established in thirty colleges and agricultural institutions. Various phases of community leadership are treated in courses in rural sociology, community and neighborhood cooperation, agricultural economics, and social leadership, as well as in general courses in sociology and religious education. This development promises great changes and progress in the general attitude toward Christian missions.

Mission Study Classes

Information about world conditions and mission problems must be brought to the membership and constituency of every church. Books, pamphlets, slides, and moving-picture films are becoming increasingly available. Ignorance concerning mission tasks is becoming more and more inexcusable. Country young people are increasingly interested in world life. The organization of mission study classes depends entirely upon the leadership of the church. It can be accomplished where the leaders will it so, and where the study is organized in a worthy manner. This is a matter of study, not of lecture work nor preaching. A pastor who had valuable experience in open-country mission-study-class work reports some of the steps of organization. Meetings were held biweekly for a definite period, usually not more than ten weeks. The work of a text was assigned in classroom fashion. The young people amazed both themselves and their leader by the interest taken and the valuable character of the work done.

Work Among Local Peoples

One of the nearest-at-hand and easiest methods of arousing interest in world missions arises in connection with the study of, and service to, the foreign born in our midst. One day a college student in a class in Americanization could not refrain from a confession before her classmates. "Why," she said, "that Polish farm hand who worked for my father, who ate at our table, and who seemed literally to hunger for us children to teach him to read and to teach him about America, was my opportunity of Christian world service and I never knew it until this minute." There was pathos almost to the point of tragedy when in the next moment she added, "And he is gone now, and I will never be able to make up that loss to him and to myself." Much of the hired help of the Western farm is foreign born. Much of the logging and rural coal mining in America is done by foreign-born labor. Here is an opportunity close at hand. The country church is literally within a mission field of its own. In the sight of God and in the view of the world's humanity the country church must rise to a new regard for local Christian service and intensive effort in this field of endeavor.

Most valuable service is being rendered in Home Mission study circles by such books as *John Wesley, Jr.* and *J. W. Thinks Black.* By these studies we are coming closer to the outlook of world service in its local relationships. The world beyond is asking America to solve her own interracial problems as a guarantee of her right to speak in world councils. Righteousness as well as justice requires this. As long as the lynching of Negroes is perpetrated in America, the world will say to us, "Physician, heal thyself." The study of these problems by young people means a new spirit in the next generation.

The solution of the Indian problem is also one of importance. We owe the Indian a peculiar debt. We can pay this debt adequately only by entering more sympathetically into fellowship with him in his problems, his points of view, and his education. There are rural churches that are near enough to the various Indian reservations to

make personal acquaintance and cooperation with them possible.

The Dignity of Lay Service

It is in no sense to detract from the significance of the ministry, of religious education, or of mission service to emphasize the importance of lay activities in our churches. It cannot be made too plain or too emphatic that the message of the ministry will never be listened to universally, until the mission of Christianity is exemplified by the deeds of the laity in business, in politics, and in daily living. Where churches are depleted in numbers, their buildings dilapidated and desecrated in popular thought, there you will find evidence of as much inefficiency among laity as among the ministry. Wherever you find a church alert, loyal, and enthusiastic, there you find laymen who are honest and upright in business as well as active in church relationships. This is as true in foreign fields as at home. Where rubber companies, whose administration is in the hands of white men, rob and demean the natives, there it is difficult to carry the message of Christianity. The future, even more than the past, is going to find young men from farms as well as from cities of America going into the ports and markets of the world. The day is here when a young man going into the service of foreign trade, needs Christian consecration and dedication as definitely as does the Christian missionary. The country church must rear her portion of these young traders in a Christian idealism which is so clear and vital that it shall dominate their business principles in later life. Without such Christian laymen abroad the mission service to the world will crumble.

Recruiting for Life Service

The country church has been, now is, and must remain the great recruiting field for life service. It is important that this recruiting go on within the church itself. College days are too late. A considerable number are enlisted while in college, but the number is all too small. Most college students have plans pretty well laid or purposes pretty clearly formulated by the time they enter. Prejudices

are deeply ingrained by that time also. Many who do not know what they will do, do know that they will not enter the ministry. Their impressionable period has largely passed. During this impressionable period in high-school days, and even earlier, emphasis must be placed by the church upon its recruiting service. It was a country preacher walking the highways of his parish who first suggested the ministry to me. He pulled me from a load of milk cans on my way to a country creamery and said simply but directly, "Earl, don't you think God wants you to be a preacher?" God did want me to become a preacher but I might never have known it, had it not been for that man. Thank God for him! Thank God for the country church that brought him into our community!

"The rural church has furnished much of the leadership for Methodism. She has filled the Methodist pulpits in the city and given the administrative leaders to the denomination. According to the survey of the Inter-Church World Movement, sixty-six and seven-tenths per cent of Methodist ministers are the sons of farmers (World Survey, American Volume, page 197).

"What reward has the rural church been given for her service to Methodism?

"(1) The charges in the country have been 'left to be supplied.' Last year eighty-seven per cent of all charges in this class were rural.

"(2) The charges in the country have been quite generally under the direction of the most poorly educated men in the ministry.

". . . 'As the old run-down farms, many of which have been abandoned, will respond to modern methods of agriculture, and give splendid returns, so will the rural church respond to real leadership and give splendid returns to the Christian church.' "[1]

Books for Reference

Missionary Education in Home and School, R. L. Diffendorfer.

J. W. Thinks Black, J. S. Stowell.

[1] *The Ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church,* Margaret Bennett.

For Discussion

1. How many people help get our breakfast? In what countries do they live?

2. Name different ways whereby this church can directly affect world affairs.

3. In what sense are we justified in "thanking God that we were born in Iowa and not in Russia" or in the slums of New York? Does such a prayer carry any responsibility for world service?

4. How far can America render mission service to the outside world and be careless of its service to the non-Christians at home? of the behavior of its business men at home and abroad?

5. How many students from this community are in touch with some rural work in colleges? (Find out definitely and have some reports from them given in class.)

6. How can we transform American life so that foreign students shall be more anxious to be Christian after living with us?

7. How many foreign-born people are there in this community?

8. What habits and thoughts are distinctive features of different nationality groups of these foreign-born peoples?

9. What larger service to them could the members of this church render? (Discuss gospel teams, special committees and various assigned tasks.)

10. How can more young people be recruited from this church and community for full-time Christian service?

And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of beauty in the hand of Jehovah, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. . . . Jehovah hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy grain to be food for thine enemies; and foreigners shall not drink thy new wine, for which thou hast labored; but they that have garnered it shall eat it, and praise Jehovah; and they that have gathered it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary. Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up an ensign for the peoples. (Isa. 62. 2–5, 8–10.)

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
(Luke 4. 18, 19.)

Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (James 1. 27.)

CHAPTER IX

THE COUNTRY CHURCH INFLUENCING SOCIAL LIFE

Before the country-life movement began, almost every country family looked forward to moving to the city, county seat, or near-by town. The reasons for this were the desires for better schools, better churches, and better social life. The country-life movement is now attempting to develop better churches, schools, and social life within the country. In order to perfect the new order each of these institutions must seek to help the others. While tested methods and plans whereby the church may aid the social order are still too few, there are some general considerations which must be made clear.

Ideals Put in Practice

The practice of her own ideals within the church organization is her greatest contribution to the more abundant life. Jesus represents the greatest force in human history in promoting the ideals of human brotherhood. Fraternity was one of the virtues of his life as well as a part of his message. "I have called you friends" was a convincing appeal to his disciples.

The country church has a peculiar opportunity to practice this ideal of brotherhood. The more closely people live together, the more easily are envy and jealousies aroused. The so-called overchurched areas present opportunities for cavil, misunderstanding, and abuse, which are anti-Christian and pagan in all their conditions and results. Antifraternal spirit among the churches is like chronic disease or a cancerous growth. It threatens the very life of the church. It must be eliminated. Its elimination requires, however, a cooperative movement among the various denominations whereby some will withdraw from fields that are overchurched and some will be granted an unhindered development in fields which are underchurched. The

possible loss in enthusiasm for a denomination is a less danger than the certain loss of ideals through competitive methods. The mind of youth demanding brotherhood and practicing that brotherhood with the youth of other denominations is one of the surest safeguards for the church's future.

In connection with her social practices the church has an opportunity to propagate important ideals. Roosevelt once remarked that extravagance rots character. A Ladies' Aid dinner which solicits food from many homes and then wastes much of it is unethical. Moreover, in some instances, families which make large donations to such a supper and then take a large family and have to pay for each member, find it a financial contribution which is overtaxing as well as wasteful. This is not an argument against meals in connection with church gatherings; it is an argument against meals for money-making purposes. The meal is an important item in church sociability but it should not run counter to ideals of economy, thrift, and democracy. The church social gathering with a meal provided by the bringing of sandwiches and a covered dish by each family, with no attempt to make profit, is a most worthy event. It makes possible a social life to all alike. The poorer feel themselves just as welcome as the more wealthy, which is not true of many church pay dinners. It is doubtful, moreover, if the church ought to tolerate such an unwholesome meal as mince pie, doughnuts and coffee at 11:30 P. M. The "morning after," with its headaches, its irritability over the noise of children, and the inability to think clearly, certainly makes it difficult to practice the ideals of Christian living.

Another type of opportunity for the practice of social ideals is to be found in connection with the care and use of church property. Unkempt lawns, unpainted and run-down buildings, and battered furniture detract greatly from the public and popular esteem of the church. This is God's world. All things in it are his. Because of consecrated use the church and all its property are his a little more especially, and must be cared for from that point of view. A community has a right to expect the church to assist in promoting beautification.

Promoting Cooperation Among Organizations

There are many organizations within a community that are attempting Christian activities. In one community a father of six children was killed. The age of the oldest child was twelve years. Nothing but the home was left for the widow and family. The Sunday school of the Methodist Church immediately went to the mother and assured her that they would buy schoolbooks for the children for a period of years. A fraternal organization in which the deceased father had held membership likewise went to the destitute home and, learning that the mother contemplated taking in washings, bought for her an electric washer. The sums which the Sunday school and the fraternal organization thus gave were practically equal in amount. Certainly, no one would insist that the service of the Sunday school was more Christian than that of the fraternal order. There are many institutions which are in a greater or less degree carrying out Christian principles in their benevolent enterprises. The church should ever recognize them as such. There can be no question but that she stands supreme in benevolent and missionary enterprise, but why should she look with scorn upon others whose most serious error is simply that of doing fewer or different things? The history of most of these institutions would show that they are the outgrowth of the Christian message and spirit. They have often taken up burdens which the church might have borne, but failed to assume. The church should everywhere give praise for all agencies which are assisting in her work.

Much of the endeavor of volunteer study clubs, of boys' and girls' clubs, and of the federation of women's clubs, is an attempt to work out the meaning of the more abundant life offered by Christianity to humanity. These institutions are coworkers in the building of Christian civilization. The position which the church occupies in human society and the claim which she makes of fellowship in the divine economy should compel her to exert a leadership in the cooperative work of all agencies.

An Annual Event

Every country church should have an annual Community

Life Institute to extend educational and cooperative methods. In its program each of the six dominant community interests should be presented and its most important needs emphasized. (1) The *civic* interests should include talks on health, sanitation, and government problems of law and order. (2) The *economic* interests should provide talks on phases of that industry which is dominant in the community. If agriculture is chief, the county agent, the township chairman of the farm bureau, a pure-bred stock raiser, and a poultryman might be called upon. (3) In the *educational* program the county superintendent, a member of the local teaching force, and members of the school board and parent-teachers association should be used. (4) For the *social and recreational* emphasis a banquet with toasts may be put on by the young people and followed with games. (5) To include the *home* as a community interest, talks should be given upon such subjects as "A Father and His Sons," "A Mother and Her Daughters," and "Neighborhood Responsibility for Good Homes." (6) By including Sunday within the time of the program, the church services become the opportunity for presenting the *religious* interests of community life. Some outside assistance should be secured, but much of the talent should be from within the community. The real development and progress of community life comes through the effort of those who live within its boundaries.

Such program will give a kaleidoscopic view of the entire community life and interests. It will show all interests as bound together and a part of each other. The community is like the hand with each interest separate as a finger, but all working together.

A Recognized Community Center

A building equipped for community center activities is an essential asset of every community. This may well be provided in connection with the church equipment. However, the value of a community center is dependent upon community cooperation, and any recognized center will be satisfactory which secures that cooperation. The point which we wish to emphasize clearly here is that whether it provides the housing or not, the church must promote

such a center. Professor Paul L. Vogt[1] has indicated a few considerations suggesting the reasonableness of the church as such a center. It is usually located in the center of the small town, whereas the schoolhouse is usually located on the outskirts. The pastor is available for more time in community leadership than is the school superintendent. The church is noted for its democracy. The support of the school is required by the law, whereas the support of the church is voluntary. In the cases of interdenominational friction and jealousy, the problem of community center relationships offers the finest opportunity for settling upon cooperative plans. Community life at its present stage absolutely requires the cooperation of the churches for social purposes. It is suicidal to continue a competitive rivalry which is, in fact, community warfare. The following from Fiske is clear and important: "There is a great social impulse in the country but its force is centrifugal. It tends to split up the community into jealous, suspicious groups. This is nothing short of social crime. Strong measures must be taken not only to prevent further social stratification, but to compel a practical organic federation which will unite the personal forces, combine available resources, and focus on mutual interests."[2]

Of course it will be recognized that activities of community-wide interest are more necessary than the building. These can and should be carried on even though a building is absent. Summer meetings can be held in open places, in groves, and in parks. The homes of the community can be used to a much larger degree than is commonly supposed. Where facilities are available, community center activities must increase the play and amusement program. Creating amusement among our own groups is far better fun than seeking it at distant centers.

Unity of thought and action grows out of community fellowship and organization. The forms of this life and activity should be native to the local interests. There has been too much aping of the city. The old-fashioned husking bee with its races and games is a far more wholesome and valuable type of social recreation for the small town

[1] *Church Cooperation in Community Life*, p. 718.
[2] G. W. Fiske, *The Challenge of the Country*, p. 181. Association Press, publishers.

than an imported carnival company. "The problem for the country is to develop a wholesome social life and an efficient institutional life which shall avoid the extremes of the city and yet shall get country people to working together harmoniously and happily."[3]

Promoting Volunteer Study Clubs

One of the most important educational institutions in America is the volunteer study club. Its importance has not been generally recognized. Only the extension service from colleges and universities has appeared to estimate properly its significant place in American life. The church has an incomparably important opportunity in this field.

The curricula of our schools, colleges, and universities cannot adequately fit us for the immediate religious, social, and political problems of the world. Even our students in the theological seminaries study more diligently the Westminster Confession or the debates of Athanasius than they do the present controversy that is rending the modern church, or the debate that is on between the opponents and proponents of fundamentalism and modernism. Yet everyone will recognize that for us to-day the last-named problems are more significant. It is the purposeful study program participated in by both the university-trained and the untrained mind that will solve our problems to-day. No study of the political or national history of the past alone prepares us adequately for the problems involved in the League of Nations, neither can we understand these problems apart from their history. Each era has its own problems, the solution of which depends upon first-hand careful study of them. Isaiah remarked centuries ago that swords should be beaten into plowshares. Why should not the church take up careful study relating to problems of war? Recent literature resulting from the World War has invaluable material, such as: Will Irwin's *The Next War*, Philip Gibbs' *Now It Can Be Told* and *More That Must Be Told*. A country church that is having difficulty in developing an adult class for study could very easily secure interest in a week-day course upon such a theme for a period of three months.

[3] G. W. Fiske, *The Challenge of the Country*, p. 119. Association Press, publishers.

Some volunteer study experiments in mothers' clubs were recently conducted. In each instance the papers prepared by these country mothers, although ofttimes showing the signs of dishwater in their first draft, will rank well beside some more academic chapters in child psychology written by trained scholars. In these experiments the papers were printed by the local newspaper. This gave the subjects under discussion community-wide publicity and also added greatly to the incentive for work and study upon the part of the members of the club. When the church launches out into a larger program of volunteer study of this kind, she will find a far higher grade of intellectual ability than she now suspects.

Books for Reference

Social Organizations, C. H. Cooley.
The Reconstruction of Religion, C. A. Ellwood.
Rural Sociology, J. M. Gillette.

For Discussion

1. To what extent will people who dislike each other work together upon an important project?
2. Enumerate the values of preparing and partaking of meals together.
3. How many organizations are there in this community? For what ages? For what purpose?
4. What must each and every organization do to be of community value?
5. What definite community ideals is your church promoting?
6. What study work is being done in this community by women's clubs? By farm bureaus? by boys' and girls' clubs? By commercial clubs?
7. What subjects ought to be carefully studied in volunteer class work in our community?
8. What world situations are especially challenging the interest of American young people to-day?
9. What are the three best books you know of upon each of the following: The Bible, faith, prayer, missions? How many other persons in the community have read them? How many would be interested in reading them and then meeting to discuss them?

Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye grieved; for the joy of Jehovah is your strength. . . . And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them. . . . And they offered great sacrifices that day, and rejoiced; for God had made them rejoice with great joy; and the women also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off. (Neh. 8. 10, 12; 12. 43.)

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. (Zech. 8. 4, 5.)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. (Isa. 9. 2, 3.)

> Be glad in Jehovah, and rejoice, ye righteous;
> And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.
> (Psa. 32. 11.)

The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! And wisdom is justified by her works. (Matt. 11. 19.)

And they said unto him, The disciples of John fast often, and make supplications; likewise also the *disciples* of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink. And Jesus said unto them, Can ye make the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? (Luke 5. 33, 34.)

Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain. And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they *do it* to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. (1 Cor. 9. 24, 25.)

CHAPTER X

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AIDING IN RECREATIONAL LIFE

How we pray is affected by what we play. There is no escape from this truth, which we see evidenced in its negative as well as its positive application. We have known young people whose warmth of faith has been cooled by a single evening of questionable amusement. They have felt themselves automatically eliminated from fellowship with the church. We have also watched esteem and affection for the church and her program for world uplift being developed through wise programs of recreation.

We must not forget that Jesus' first miracle was performed at a wedding feast. He risked reputation as a teacher by deliberate association in the social life of his day. He was called a wine-bibber and a glutton for no other reason than that he constantly participated in social and recreational experiences.

The church has been the parent of education, aiding in the development of the public school system and pointing the way to educational progress along all lines. The church has promoted health, built hospitals, and emphasized with beauty and power the practice of Jesus in restoring health. The church is called upon in a like manner to assist in a better program of play. Just as the ignorant mind and sick body have defeated the more abundant life, so depraved practices of recreation have injured the soul of man.

Loving Good and Hating Evil

"Hate the evil and love the good, and establish justice in the gate."[1] There can be no doubt that the church has hated evil in the play life. She has said "no" to many things. The call to-day is for a constructive program. There is no value in persistently saying, "Thou shalt not,"

[1] Amos 5. 15.

without consistently suggesting what "Thou shalt do." Many ministers have considered their duty performed when they have spoken their mind in the pulpit. The time to begin preaching persistently against any evil is after other forces have been set in motion whereby a constructive program of better things may be carried out. Preaching must supplement other efforts and not be a substitute for them. Preaching about Sunday baseball should occur in connection with a campaign for week-day baseball and after forces have been set in motion to provide it.

The Methodist Church, through her General Conference of 1920, made the following enlightening and hopeful statement: "While we are aware that improper amusements are a 'fruitful source of spiritual decline,' we also believe that the social and recreational instinct is God-given and, if properly guided, will strengthen rather than injure the spiritual life. The church must no longer allow her youth to 'go into near-by villages and buy themselves the victuals of social life,' but, rather, should say, 'Sit down, and eat' of the clean, wholesome things provided by the church, which seeks to build a social and recreational life that is spiritual, and a spiritual life that is social and recreational."[2] The General Conference of 1924 strengthened this appeal by directing the Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals to promote a campaign of education in this direction.

Equipment for Recreation

Most communities do not have adequate equipment for the best recreational program. They think they cannot afford it. This is not because communities are poor, but because they lack vision. In fact, ample recreational equipment and supervision would cost less than that which is being spent by any community in seeking amusement at distant centers. More money is being spent for gasoline and automobile wear in taking young people to distant playhouses, dance halls, and recreational places than it would require to erect and equip a community center building

[2] *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1920, paragraph 69. The Methodist Book Concern.

and properly supervise its activities. In addition, the moral costs of finding recreation and entertainment beyond home community boundaries are almost incalculable. The average youth will do things among strangers which he would not do among friends. The farther away from home and the later the hour of the night, the greater is the danger of lessening moral restraints. There is a sense in which the community equipment is like a hospital. Its main function is to recreate energies and spirit. It is dangerous for the patient to go too far to get help. The automobile has increased these dangers because it has made long-distance travel easy. But the ultimate result of a community life that is off center and unbalanced, is debauchery, character deterioration, and the breakdown of family life.

The difficulty in raising funds for equipment will be greatly lessened if these values of play can be visualized in proper perspective. Public opinion usually fails to consider causes adequately. It wonders why evil exists. It prays that the devil may be cast out, without realizing that lack of community equipment for furnishing adequate recreational life is a primary cause of evil conditions.

It cannot be said too often that crowding old equipment is the best argument for new. Let the program grow beyond the facilities to accommodate the crowds. Let no one apologize for the inconvenience or unnecessary expense in hiring halls in the development of a proper program. Doing these things creates community sentiment for more adequate equipment. Nor can it be emphasized too much that lawns, river banks, large barns, groves, and homes must be used in a larger way than has occurred in most communities. There is a romanticism about outdoor places which is wholesome and spiritual, and they must be used even where the community has the best of building equipment. They certainly must be used where the community does not have it.

Every community with a population of two thousand has approximately three hundred young people between the ages of twelve and twenty-one. When we compare this number with many colleges over the United States, we get a new perspective of rural responsibility and obligation. The modern college with an enrollment of three hundred

students must be provided with an equipment costing at least a million dollars and an annual expense budget of at least seventy thousand dollars. Are not the three hundred young people of every community's own resident group just as worthy of care and expense as those in a college?

Planning Recreational Events

Plans for young people's socials under church direction must begin at least as far in advance of the event as a dance management hires its orchestra. Too frequently the plans for a church social have been begun at four o'clock in the afternoon of the day upon which the social is to occur. Instead of having provided more games than may be needed, we usually have just enough to piece out the evening. Too frequently we play one game until everyone is tired of it—too tired even to think of a new one. Summer institutes and district gatherings of various kinds are rendering excellent service in furnishing better programs of play. Many books are also being published which leaders of recreational activities will find helpful.

Games and events in series are found to be valuable. A country church in Connecticut developed a remarkable program of "full-moon socials." On the Tuesday nearest the full moon, the country for miles around came to expect its full-moon social. Often in the summer, when these events were held as lawn fêtes, as many as five hundred people would gather. Many communities have planned a year's play program with groups competing for honors and score points. The people are divided into three or four groups of twenty each with the entire evening devoted to competitive games, charades, book-dramatizations, etc. Records of points made by each group are kept throughout the year. The groups are sometimes named after colleges or baseball leagues or "ghost-goof types" and have yells and songs to support enthusiasm.

There is no better opportunity for the development of local leadership than that is afforded in planning the recreational programs. Young people enjoy this work. Leadership in play is as native to many as play itself. Wise leaders in the church will consider the training for leadership in play as one of their serious responsibilities. Leader-

ship conferences and training schools should be held in every community.

Where Too Many Programs Exist

There are many communities where lodges, schools, American Legion, churches, and other organizations are having difficulty in finding evenings enough for their desired events. In many cases the overlapping is not serious, but unnecessary enmities and jealousies are aroused by even occasional occurrences on the same evening of programs which need not overlap or conflict. In the majority of instances, however, there is an imperative demand for cooperation in working out the community recreational program. The different organizations need to unite their recreational interests. Where the consolidated schools have been developed there should be the most careful cooperation between the school and church. If competition between these institutions develops, it is sure to be detrimental to both education and religion. No institution dare talk of priority of right. All are justified in proportion to their aims and efforts to develop a better life in the community. Each has a place dependent entirely upon the service rendered.

The leaders of all institutions must get together and work out aims, goals, and methods for the community, and then cooperate in promoting them. No group or section can be left out. It is at this point that greatest enmities arise. One group says or implies that it cannot work with another. This is false. They live in the same community and must seek points and methods of agreement. All groups send their children to school, and future intermarriage among some of them is inevitable. The only way out for any community is the fullest cooperation between all groups within its boundaries. It can be done. In many communities it is being done. In every community the grace of God will aid if effort toward cooperation is made.

Responsibilities of the Home

A grave danger threatens any community if recreation becomes institutionalized; if it is thought necessary to find amusement and recreation in a community institution

rather than at home. It is generally agreed that the usual moving-picture show has nothing of value for the child under ten years of age. Playgrounds are essential for the outdoor play of the young child of the city, but in the country his play life should be largely furnished by the home. For this home supervision and guidance there is no substitute. Within the realm of home activities are included parties, special celebrations, and many neighborhood events. *It is a sad commentary upon home life when children associate good times solely with going somewhere.* There can be no doubt that the church has a great responsibility for building larger unity within the home through assistance in planning its recreation.

The Dangers of Commercialization

Both the spirit of play and the God-given instinct for it are debased by using recreation as a means of money-making, whether such promotion for profit is by the church or by any other institution. It is socially criminal for a young people's society to attempt to make money, no matter how worthy the project, by capitalizing or commercializing the spirit of play. The money for benevolences and for other religious projects should be raised by gifts and stewardship rather than by exploiting the spirit of play. This is an ideal that does not easily gain support. Many of the so-called "best churches" continue to do otherwise. Nevertheless, the day is rapidly approaching when we shall see clearly that playing together and eating together are too significant religiously and socially for the church to make profit thereby. There is a vast difference and a sharp distinction between self-support and profit. The church will gain public confidence in its insistence concerning the evils of private commercialization when it eliminates these practices from its own life.

Community Aims and Goals in Recreation

The church has prayed that evils might be removed. It has spoken against them, but the greater need is for it to create wholesome sentiment toward definite aims and positive goals. These aims and goals should not be abstract theories but definite and workable plans and principles.

Regular play days should be arranged in every community. Weekly half holidays for both store and farm should be maintained. A sufficient number of farm communities have tried this plan to prove conclusively that work will be carried on more advantageously with the holiday than without it. Young people in the home and hired help both respond with more and better work where the holiday prevails, and where it is occupied with carefully planned community play.

It is true that the more the leisure the more supervision is needed. This supervision must include the planning of a complete schedule of intercommunity events. One of the best recent examples of this development is the Marshall (Minn.) District Athletic Association. In this district seventeen towns have joined in intercommunity athletics. Their schedules include baseball, volley ball, and horseshoe (quoits), together with leadership for women's, girls', and children's play. In all of these events two communities are scheduled to engage the same day at the same place. The day thereby becomes a play day for the entire community rather than for any one part of it.

More emphasis must be placed upon the discovery and development of talent within play circles. Musical, dramatic, and leadership abilities of every type can best be developed in connection with these democratic, community-inclusive plans for play. The waste of human powers through lack of development is the social sin of this age. The church will be rendering large social and personal service by discovering this talent, calling it out, challenging it to the highest development, and assistance in it.

More of the community's entertainment should be furnished from within itself. Even the Chautauqua systems are unconsciously contributing to this idea. They are, in fact, limiting their own future by emphasizing the home talent children's event. The children's day is invariably the big day. This points clearly to the fact that the best entertainment for any community is found within its own boundaries, and not imported from without.

The community must plan to take over and supervise its recreational life just as definitely and completely as it supervises its water supply. Most country towns own

their own pumping station and water reservoir. The reason for this is simply that water is a necessity; every one must have it. When poisoned or unfit for human consumption it is highly menacing to community life. No profit should be made upon anything that is so highly essential to every individual. This reasoning applies with equal force to the problems of community recreation. The community therefore must take over and supervise its recreational life. The church's responsibility in molding the sentiment and creating the basis for this development is a task of supreme importance.

Books for Reference

Games for Playground, Home, School and Gymnasium, J. H. Bancroft.

Education Through Play, H. S. Curtis.

Handbook for Boy Scouts, Boy Scouts of America, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Good Times for Girls, M. E. Moxcey.

Recreation for Church and Community, W. F. Powell.

For Discussion

1. Suggest some events in Jesus' life or statements from the Gospels which suggest his interest in recreational activities.

2. Make out lists of things which the church considers harmful and things which it considers helpful. Why does it so classify them?

3. To what extent is this church developing a helpful recreational program for the community?

4. For what forms of recreation and pleasure is a home the best place?

5. Make a month's record of this community's attendance upon evening programs in other communities.

6. Make out a calendar of outdoor social events which should occur during a year in this community.

7. What big pageants and other all-community events should be held every year?

8. Show how raising money by the gifts and regular payments of the stewardship plan is better financial econ-

omy than raising money by a supper, a social or an unusual entertainment.

9. How can we secure better cooperation between the institutions of the community?

10. Name four important aims and goals for constructing the recreational program of this community.

Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, according to thy tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. Thou shalt not wrest justice: thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a bribe; for a bribe doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. (Deut. 16. 18–20.)

Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a denarius. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. (Matt. 22. 17b–21.)

John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followed not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. (Mark 9. 38–41.)

Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me. (John 21. 21, 22.)

CHAPTER XI

THE COUNTRY CHURCH COOPERATING IN COMMUNITY SERVICE

The church's aims in service must be as exalted as her claims of importance. The divine mission of the church can best be proven by persistent and continuous human service. When the disciples of John the Baptist came from John's prison cell asking Jesus, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" Jesus was perfectly willing to trust them with that message about himself and his work which concerned largely his work in community service. Jesus replied, "Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them."[1]

The Church's Responsibility

In patterning after the Master, the church must seek to lose its life in an endeavor to serve and save the community in which it has its life. Whatever is of large significance to the community is of large significance to the church. It is not enough that the church shall diagnose ills and tell what is wrong. It must prescribe remedies and mark pathways toward the right. It must be a unifying agency among the discordant and rivaling interests. It must consider itself a member ex officio of every group and committee which is planning and laboring for community uplift—not to demand rights and consideration, but to assure cooperation. It must, by its assistance, aid in teaching the ignorant, making the unlovely lovable, renewing the broken in spirit, and in establishing justice. This can be done only by participation in concrete daily problems and incidents of community life.

The points at which communities break down are the

[1] Luke 7. 20–22.

points at which the church should render assistance. In other chapters we have noted the six dominant community interests: the civic, economic, educational, social and recreational, home and religious. It is amid the difficulties and discouragements, the enmities and jealousies, the frauds and deceits of administering social relations in these dominant interests that help must be given. Not one of these interests is above or below the dignity of the church; they are each and all of the greatest concern to the church. Her mission is to help people live after the pattern of Christ in every relationship.

Recognizing Characteristic Functions

No institution in community life is justified in thinking of itself "more highly than it ought to think." It must see itself as a cooperating factor of the community unit. No institution ought to consider itself as sufficient or central to the extent of considering other institutions subsidiary. A community's needs are diversified. It has need of political life, business life, educational and social life. The lack of organization in any one of these varied fields does not demand that some one institution shall furnish that lack. It does demand, however, that these specialized organizations be fostered and brought to a normal life by other institutions which are strong. This mutual helping and supplementing is the significant meaning of cooperation. Professor Burr furnishes a splendid analogy and discussion in the following passage:

"The members of the body have definite functions to perform. The eyes are for seeing and the fingers for feeling; but when the eyes are blinded, the fingers may, through the sense of touch, render certain service which the eyes normally render. It is certainly the duty of the fingers to take the place of the eyes in this way as far as possible; but when the ability to see returns to the eyes, their functions must be turned back to them with all the responsibilities and privileges involved. The armless freak in the side show writes calling cards with his toes; he is to be honored for making his living that way. But that does not argue that the toes are for the business of writing calling cards. Just so the church is not for the pur-

pose of permanently conducting a farmers' institute, a business men's club, a gymnasium or health center, although in some sections it is necessary that it render temporarily such emergency treatment. Neither is the Farm Bureau to undertake to attend to all the social needs of the rural community, although this task may devolve upon it while the other institutions are lying dormant. Nor is the school to manage the religious and business activities, although in given instances it may be necessary for it to do double duty in these ways for a short time."[2]

Church Cooperation in Civic Life

Too frequently it is expected that a rainy election day will enlarge the election returns, since rural men will vote when they cannot work but will remain in the fields if the day is suitable for outside work. The message of the church should carry to all its constituents the imperative Christian obligation of the ballot. Now that women have the privilege of voting, the church's message of civic reform and betterment is more than doubled in its value.

Jesus' healing ministry will be exemplified by the church's interest in the program of health and sanitation. The recent health statistics for rural regions have been very discouraging. Country people have been amazed to learn of the seriousness of unsanitary conditions among them. "In 1915 the Indiana State Board of Health made a house-to-house survey of all the rural homes in four counties. A score card was kept of each house, the chief score points being cleanliness, neatness, decency, and comfort. A score of less than 75 per cent was adjudged to denote an unsanitary condition. The average score for 1,374 homes was 53, and 84 per cent were unsanitary."[3] This condition can be corrected, but only by literature, pulpit and press emphasis, and that type of neighborly service which the church is fitted to give. The objections which were made to Jesus' healing upon the Sabbath day are still made about county nursing, about dental examinations in the school, and about hospital and clinical service.

[2] Walter Burr, *Rural Organization*, p. 26ff. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

[3] Gillette, *Constructive Rural Sociology*, p. 142. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

These are nevertheless agencies of Christianity's power of healing. Many methods for improving the care and health of mothers and babies are at hand and awaiting the publicity and cooperation which the church should give.

Church Cooperation in Economic Life

Essential economic lessons to be learned to-day are those of idealism, of integrity, and of justice. The problem of soil robbing is essentially a problem of honesty. We recognize the menace of stealing when a man robs a boy's pocket; but we fail to recognize that the man who robs the soil is just as certainly robbing the pocket of the boy. We have laws and a police force to protect the former. We have only the gospel and its eternal application in justice to apply to the latter.

Soil fertility and maximum production are community factors of vast significance to the church and every other institution of community life. Late in 1922 an official of one of the leading denominations of the Middle West reported that six members of the official board of one of the churches in the grain belt had taken advantage of bankruptcy laws. Surely no one will deny that the church is highly concerned with economic conditions when such evidence is available. The country church is challenged to assist in the cooperation which may be established between agricultural college, farm bureau, and other agricultural agencies whereby the economic life of the country may be improved. Even the selfish point of view should make the Protestant Church recognize that her very future is threatened by the increase of tenant farming. The service of every agency is needed in the solution of this menacing problem. When it is realized that the element most needed in the solution is brotherliness in economic affairs, then it is seen that without the church or her message the solution is impossible.

A vital economic agency of education and improvement is found in connection with corn shows, community and county fairs. Thus far the largest relationship which the church has borne to these events has been to furnish Ladies' Aid dinners or to criticize the rowdyism which occurs. It cannot be denied that rowdyism and tawdry concessions

have accompanied these institutions. They have grown up as weeds around beneficial plants. They can be eliminated, however. If the Christian people in every community and county where these fairs are held supported the display of fruit, vegetables, animals, handicraft, and culinary products, the competition would largely engage the attention of those in attendance, and less time would be available for participation in the evils of the fair. The church can also see to it that the amusement concessions are clean and wholesome, or itself supply recreation to all who attend.

Church Cooperation in Education

Correlation of the programs of the church and the public school has been suggested in Chapter III. It is well to note, however, that community education is by no means completely comprehended within the public-school system. The Americanization movement with its evening schools for the foreign born, and the more recent nation-wide movement for complete elimination of illiteracy are suggestive of large educational fields beyond the boundaries of formal educational institutions. Here are services of great opportunity for the church.

We believe that an unrecognized influence of great value inheres in the rural life of America. Some of the foreign born who have been engaged as hired help on farms have greatly benefited by the Christianizing and Americanizing forces of the farm table talk and daily companionship. Many farmers of the Middle West came over on the same ships and under the same conditions as the industrial workers of the cities. The former, starting in as the hired help of the farmer, sitting at his table and laboring with him in fields and at chores, rapidly becomes an American citizen. The latter group, removed from employer, living under undesirable housing conditions, passing sons and daughters of the employer at play in the parks and pleasure resorts in the cities, learns to curse the beautiful home of the employer upon the hill, and develops in the direction of extreme radicalism and joins the organizations which inculcate class hatred. By developing appreciation of the significant possibilities of table talk and

comradeship between the farm operator and his hired help, the church can aid largely in Americanization problems. This does not mean creating a new relationship but developing and spiritualizing an important old relationship.

Developing Community Loyalty

Community loyalty is one dynamic of the kingdom of God. It is a highly significant spiritual force. The neighborly community is the largest of the "primary groups" of social organization in which face-to-face relationships can be and must be worked out harmoniously and with complete justice for all. Let us recall again Professor Cooley's discussion of this field and the comments upon its significance made by Professor Elwood.[4] As the family offers the first unit of this "face-to-face" relationship, so the community offers the last. Here dominant interests and mutual relationships must be worked out by men actually living together. The most unchristian social strife, after all, is not war between nations, but family feuds, and petty, jealous strife which occurs within communities. While neither war nor feuds can be excused, the strife between nations can be more easily explained: racial and national differences are more complex and therefore more difficult of solution; it is harder to understand and love people that are never seen. Family and group difficulties within a community have their roots and growths within easy range of vision and therefore present easier solutions. No one dare deny either the intensity of these community infections or the difficulties involved. Everyone will admit, however, that the coming of the kingdom of God depends very directly upon the eradication and healing of these community ailments.

The hope of cure here, like all kingdom building, depends both upon individual salvation and enlightenment and upon social vision and endeavor which centers in community loyalty. The heart of its success is found in the affection, enthusiasm, and loyalty with which every citizen of a community cooperates in its support. The father in the family says: "This is my child. I will support it. I will educate it. I will protect it. If it is ill, I will increase

[4] See above, p. 25ff.

the amount necessary for its support. If it needs special aid in education, I will gladly furnish such. If it needs extra protection, all of my strength is available in its behalf. This is my child, within my family. This is my task. In it I find both glory and joy of service." Likewise, the member of the community must say: "This is my community. In strength or in weakness, its life and development are my responsibility. If backward, I shall render it special care and nurturing service. If it is forward, my pride in it will aid its assumption of still larger responsibilities. This is my community. In it lies the glory and joy of service." This will not mean the development of a narrow provincialism and the crudeness of "township bigotry." It means, rather, the highest application of individual and collective service possibilities.

The Church's Own Task

It must be clearly understood that even in the matter of community cooperation the chief interest of the church is the service which it alone can render in religious and spiritual things. The development of the religious life is its task. Promotion of spiritual insight is its chief concern.

The church's achievement in its own field determines its right to assist in other fields of community development. If its own work is not well done it has little right to offer suggestions or assistance in other promotional projects. A church with no program, with begging financial tactics and without even the beginnings of a forward-moving program of religious education need not, and ought not, hope to be heard in cooperative councils. On the other hand the church which has a forward looking program, which is buoyant with zeal and enthusiasm, will find that its assistance is sought and its influence effectual in all community matters.

It is impossible to overstate the significance of the church's own task. There is almost unanimous agreement that the inspirational force of community life is generated within institutions of religion. Professor Burr says that religion "is the heart and soul of the community." The contribution which the church, and the church alone, can

render to the community, in maintaining buoyant faith and renewing life purpose, is beyond computation. It is the essence of cooperation. It propagates the cooperative spirit. It furnishes the warmth of an atmosphere in which community loyalty develops.

Professor Lindeman has thus ably expressed this all-important dependence of community cooperation and citizenship upon religion: "The modern community movement will fail to give democracy its practical expression if it is not motivated by a spiritual dynamic. Such a dynamic force was unloosed with the message and life of Jesus of Nazareth. He lived his life on the basis of certain basic democratic assumptions and he scientifically demonstrated those assumptions. In his eyes all individuals were of value; throughout the social implications of his message sin became democratic and the burden of all; in his aspirations all humankind were included. He assumed that to have a human enemy was a social anomaly. And he believed that religion was essentially a system of behavior by which the individual need not be swallowed up in the group, but by which the individual must find ultimate satisfactions in spiritualizing the group."[5]

Books for Reference

A Christian in the Countryside, R. A. Felton.
The Community Center, L. J. Hanifan.
The Farmer and His Community, D. Sanderson.
Essentials of Community Efficiency, Shepherd.
Church Cooperation in Community Life, P. L. Vogt.

For Discussion

1. Just what do you think Jesus meant when he said, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's"?

2. Do people ever "give a cup of water because they are Christ's" without being professing Christians?

3. Make a list of organizations of your community which have a president, a secretary, and a treasurer. How many different persons thus have representative responsibility to the community?

[5] E. C. Lindeman, *The Community*, p. 74.

4. Which of these organizations contribute to each of the dominant interests of community life as noted on page [114].

5. In what specific ways and to what extent ought the church to aid in a better economic life in this community?

6. What should be the extent and what the limit of the church's efforts to secure better health?

7. In which of the six dominant interests has our community the greatest need?

8. How can the church help in making county fairs cleaner and safer for morals?

9. If the church is busy at its own religious educational program, will it have time for cooperation in community affairs?

10. To what extent does all community cooperation depend upon the religious spirit?

Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge themselves: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God commands thee so, then shalt thou be able to endure, and all this people also shall go to their place in peace. (Exod. 18. 21–23.)

And the twelve called the multitudes of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. (Acts 6. 2–4.)

Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough *to receive it.* (Mal. 3. 10.)

And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but ye only; for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need. Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account. (Phil. 4. 15–17.)

CHAPTER XII

THE COUNTRY CHURCH DEVELOPING BUSINESS EFFICIENCY

The main items of the church's business program include the community survey and compilation of statistical data, conduct of the entire educational program, publicity, equipment, and finance. In many cases (perhaps still in the majority) the business of the country church is sadly in arrears when compared with that of other institutions. Poor business conditions in the country church are just like unsprayed trees, unpainted buildings, and run down fences. They have been uncared for. When they are given adequate attention they respond with encouraging improvement. Short pastorates and lack of ministers and laymen trained for community and cooperative efforts are the leading causes for this condition of inefficiency. Each of these causes is also the result of conditions which can be corrected only by patient effort and wise cooperation. Longer pastorates require something from both laymen and ministers. It is often easier for a minister to move than to tackle the next hard job. The reason that the average length of pastorate is about two years is simply that two years is about the limit of endurance. Both preacher and people can tolerate undesirable but new conditions for that long. Then the change that is needed is thought to be a change of ministers when in reality it is a change of method and the solution of some difficult problems, the cure of some chronic community ills.

The Community Survey and Compilation of Statistical Data

Chapter II discusses the main items and details of the church survey. We need here to emphasize that this is a specific matter of church business. Too many surveys depend upon the newness and enthusiasm of the minister. The data are supposed to be necessary only for his infor-

mation. This assumption is entirely wrong. The survey and all other data and records concerning the church life are a part of the business detail of the church organization. The annual statement of resources and liabilities of any bank are no more necessary to its life and development than the facts of the church and community survey are to the life and progress of the church.

The study of statistics is coming into a larger place in social and religious organization, and nowhere is this study of greater importance than in the rural church. The inspiration to evangelistic effort will increase with definite knowledge of the number who are not Christians. The numerical reports of evangelistic meetings mean little unless they also indicate the number who have not as yet been reached. Every published statement concerning a revival effort which rejoices that thirty-eight conversions were recorded should also include as a part of the figures the three hundred and thirty-eight who have not been reached. Nowhere have survey statistics been more startling than those recently taken in some older and well-established Christian communities which show that more than fifty per cent of the people have no church preference or specific religious interest. The reorganization of the church program, the size of its budget, the challenge to its religious educational efforts and to its evangelism depend upon what the statistics reveal. This is a part of the business of the church.

Keeping church records is another important business item. Many churches could not fittingly commemorate an anniversary event because records have been lost. Often the young people's society or the Ladies' Aid desires to commemorate a special service or achievement but finds it impossible because no accurate records have been preserved. It is imperative for personal as well as organizational needs of the church that these matters should be cared for. Every one of its organizations should be furnished with a respectable and permanent record book. The business transaction of every organization, including organized Sunday-school classes, should be carefully preserved, and thoroughly prepared reports including statistics should be given semi-annually.

Business Efficiency in the Educational Program

The educational program of the church includes the Sunday school, the young people's organizations, missionary societies, and the established enterprises of the church, such as stewardship, relief and charitable endeavors. Although this program has not so far been clearly defined, the mention of some of the items and a brief survey of some of the problems will aid in clarifying our thought here.

It is perfectly clear that the organization of the educational program should be as efficient as any part of the business administration of the church. There has been a great deal of waste effort and lost motion through lack of satisfactory correlation. The Sunday school and the young people's societies, for instance, have been considered as separate institutions. Within the Methodist Episcopal Church a consolidation of Boards including the Board of Sunday Schools and the Board of Epworth League was achieved in the 1924 General Conference, which promises a new coordination of efforts. Even where there has been little duplication of effort the lack of harmony between the Sunday school and young people's organization has been a source of confusion and irritation. This is being overcome in some local churches by a consolidation of educational agencies. There is a reason to hope that a better overhead organization of the educational work of the church will be developed in the years ahead.

Missionary education must be promoted with diligence. The brotherhood of man is an impossible ideal until we know who our neighbors and brothers are, what they need, and how their needs can be satisfied. To obtain this knowledge requires literature, pictures, dramatizations, speakers, and organizations to make this material available. Separate organizations such as King's Heralds and allied children's movements must, like the young people's societies, be correlated to avoid confusion and overlapping. But more often in the small churches it is the terrible deadliness of inertia, the quietude of nothing attempted, that is so baffling and discouraging. The worst thing about country-church work in America is not that so little is being achieved but that so little is being attempted.

Many people view stewardship as merely a method used by the church and the minister to increase benevolent offerings. It is thought of as a sort of "trick of the trade." The tithe is viewed as a biblical requirement of far less importance than the Ten Commandments and yet belonging in the realm of religious prescriptions. The truth is that stewardship is nothing of this sort. It is clearly a religious ideal. It relates to time and talent as well as money. It is a foundation stone in the building of Christian character. It is a vital means of expressing the idea of man's relationship to God. It views life as a gift. Education toward this ideal is one of the important projects of church administration. Much literature on stewardship is available; official church boards of every denomination are creating literature and study books in this field. Young people like the stewardship ideal. As a means of establishing spiritual principles as well as increasing the amount of money, time, and talent available, stewardship is essential to the larger program of the church in building the kingdom of God.

Specific goals and aims of effort are essential to the educational program. The church has been slow to adopt minimum standards of effort and achievement. To be sure, measuring spiritual gains by material standards is undesirable and oftentimes a menace; nevertheless, low aims and lethargy often result from a failure to standardize the program and to set up definite objectives. The goals should be classified under at least four heads: evangelism, religious education, social and recreational features, and business efficiency.

It is an important aid to evangelistic effort to aim each year for a certain per cent net increase for the church and its various organizations. Detailed methods should be worked out for obtaining this increase. Personal evangelism should reach every individual throughout the parish. Sunday-school teachers should have definite lists of pupils and parents to visit, and lists for daily remembrance in prayer. A Sunday-school Decision Day should be observed at least annually with careful educational preparation a long time beforehand. A gospel team should be organized in every church and hold itself in readiness for service both

in outlying neighborhoods and in neighborhood churches. An exchange of gospel teams among neighboring churches always quickens the life of each.

There are methods and plans of religious education whose importance is often overlooked. Some of these should be adopted by every church as a part of its educational program. These should include such special features as the story hour club for parents who dedicate a few minutes every evening to telling their own children biblical and character stories; Bible dramatization studies and demonstrations; father-and-son and mother-and-daughter banquets; Bible-story contests; young people's delegations sent to institutes and conferences. It is part of the business administration of the church to decide which of these and other projects it will promote, and to concentrate its efforts upon them. A few can be selected for one year and others added later.

In some communities the church should definitely promote a week day half-holiday. In all communities leisure time should be more carefully supervised. Talent must be systematically discovered and developed, for the loss of undeveloped special abilities is far worse than that of any other national resource. Various organizations for the cultivation of right habits should be promoted. The pioneer, Scout, and Camp Fire work is very valuable in this direction. Thrift, courtesy, honesty, and reverence do not develop accidentally but through training. They must be fostered through effort and under religious direction. More entertainment from within the church and community should be promoted. Dramatics, pageantry, and musical cantatas will enlist the interest, care adequately for much of the spare time, and definitely develop the talent of youth. It will also be a better type of entertainment than that which comes from without the community. It is a part of the church's business to supply the executive plans for these projects.

An Efficiency Schedule

A chronological calendar for the year is an absolute necessity for efficiency in every church. It may be worked out monthly, semiannually or annually. The following

December and February items are from a semiannual calendar:

DECEMBER

Friday, 2—Old-shoe social: Epworth League
Sunday, 5—Sermon, "The Lost Art of Apostolic Days"
Wednesday, 8—Father-and-son banquet
Sunday, 12—Sermon, "The Parable of the Average Father"
Friday, 17—Musical entertainment by the orchestra
Sunday, 19—"White Cross Sunday." Pageant in the evening
Friday, 24—Christmas program and tree: Sunday school
Sunday, 26—Christmas message
Tuesday, 28—Homecoming social
Friday, 31—Watch-night services: Epworth League

FEBRUARY

Thursday and Friday, 3 and 4—Farmers' institutes and community-welfare program
Sunday, 6—Sermon, "God's Message to the Farmer"
Thursday, 10—Day of prayer for colleges
Friday, 11—Valentine social: Epworth League
Sunday, 13—Sermon, "Abraham Lincoln, God's Prophet of National Reform"
Friday, 18—Joy ride to parts unknown
Sunday, 20—Sermon, "George Washington, the Christian"
Tuesday, 22—George Washington Birthday dinner by women of Cemetery Association
Friday, 25—Musical by Upper Iowa University
Sunday, 27—Sermon, "Advice from Outsider."[1]

The fullest interest can be secured only by informing the people of the parish of the full plans for activities and events. The calendar serves as a challenge also. We do not easily omit an event which has been given a printed pledge or schedule. Many special activities drop out of the church plan just because a date was not set in advance. The calendar serves also as a basis of cooperation among the community activities. Basket-ball schedules, lyceum-bureau dates, farm-bureau demonstrations, and other community activities are arranged from six months to a year in advance of the event in order to avoid conflicts. The church calendar must be planned in advance and in cooperation with these other institutions of the community or it suffers greatly.

[1] From Illyria (Post Office, Elgin, Iowa) Community Church calendar for year 1920–21.

Equipment for the Business of the Church

The equipment of the modern country church should include the auditorium for assembly and worship; adequate housing and educational tools for the Sunday school, dining room, kitchen and more or less playroom accommodation and apparatus for the social and recreational life. But there is no reason for discouragement where these do not exist. The struggle to secure modern equipment seems to be a healthful religious enterprise. Churches which are looking forward, building reserve funds, and joyously planning for additional equipment, are happy. The only real excuse for discouragement is where self-satisfaction and lethargy exist and no interest in improvement can be aroused.

It is hardly necessary to argue the need for this equipment. The social gatherings, religious-educational programs, and the worshipful life of the church make it evident that facilities for these activities are essential. The chief problem in the minds of most churches is how to obtain them. The first move is to begin the larger program. To carry on a program which weekly meets with the discomfiture of limited equipment will do more than any other one thing to create sentiment for building projects. Too often churches are deterred from putting on programs because facilities are lacking. The very daring whereby the program is continued in spite of difficulties vigorously builds the proper sentiment for more equipment. Funds can usually be raised if the fun of expanding activities has been started.

Financial Administration

A budget system of finance, calling for regular payments of ministerial support and all regular bills, has long been recognized as the only satisfactory financial system. Comparatively few rural churches meet their financial obligations each month. In many of them a part of the financial program consists in a wild scramble during the last week or two of the Conference year to make up a deficit. This absolutely discourages a program of systematic giving and makes it difficult to get an adequate financial program inaugurated early in the year.

The indecent treatment which many ministers and creditors of the church have received has been nothing short of tragic. Ministers have not been paid for months at a time and then abused because of their lack of business principles. Many ministers have been compelled to resort to unbusinesslike transactions. While this can never excuse any unfortunate situation, it does explain some of them. The church, likewise, has often been careless in her accounts and in auditing records. Those holding church money have not always been called upon to give a rigid account, and too often dishonesty has resulted. None of these things can happen when the church conducts its affairs on a high plane of business efficiency with budget and careful auditing of all accounts.

The every-member canvass is an important item in raising church funds. The "every-member" phrase should be understood to include all of the constituency. There are many people who want the church in the community and who want to be a part of its support, but who have not as yet become members. A recent parish survey in a certain church revealed a membership of one hundred and twelve among farm people. It also revealed one hundred and twelve others who expressed preference for the same church. These latter want the church in the community and profit by its presence. Where opposition to the church arises among these people it is usually found that the only time they are visited about church matters is in connection with finances. Where this is true their criticism is just. The best preparation for an every-member canvass is careful and constant visitation.

Many churches devote a special Sunday afternoon to the canvass. Teams of at least two members visit every home and individual and take subscriptions in a personal way. This gives an opportunity for neighborly visitation and for personal discussion of church plans and .methods. Money subscriptions for its financial needs are not the outstanding deficiency in our modern church life. There are very few churches which are putting on a satisfactory religious and community program which are suffering seriously for lack of funds. The church that fills a community place receives a community support.

Publicity

"Publicity is Power." Not everyone knows all about the country church. It needs and it deserves publicity. At least a small amount for this purpose should be included in every financial budget. Frequent communications should go by mail from the pastor to officials, to membership, and constituency. Every church should have some duplicating device for printing letters and increasing the amount of this kind of publicity.

A pantagraph is also valuable. It is an inexpensive instrument which makes it possible to copy poster pictures and other drawings and diagrams. Posters should announce the special programs of the church. Above all, posters should acquaint the community at large with the ideals and endeavors of the church. The Red Cross promoted its campaign immeasurably by that wonderful poster "The Greatest Mother in the World." The church has messages of equal significance. It is the business of the church to secure slogans and other publicity features which will both advertise the church in the community and educate the people of the community to the church's ideals, purposes, and program.

Books for Reference

The Way to Win, F. B. Fisher.
Modern Church Management, A. F. McGarrah.
A Modern Church Program, A. F. McGarrah.
Workable Plans for Wide-Awake Churches, Christian F. Reisner.

For Discussion

1. What is at present included in the business of this church as the official board conducts it?
2. How many pastors has this church had during the past fifteen years?
3. What statistics for this community have been compiled and are now accessible?
4. How can this church improve its record system?
5. Discuss the effectiveness of the material on stewardship which the church is using. (Be sure to get material

from the Stewardship headquarters, 740 Rush Street, Chicago, Ill.)

6. Estimate the number of people in this community who have musical, public-speaking, and dramatic talent.

7. What equipment is needed to make this church more efficient?

8. What day is best for the "every-member canvass"?

9. How many in this class could be secured to make posters for church publicity? What types of posters are best?

10. Name six new methods of publicity. How could they be used to make this church better understood by its community?

Then answered Amos, and said unto Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycomore-trees: and Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. (Amos 7. 14, 15.)

He chose David also his servant,
And took him from the sheepfolds:
From following the ewes that have their young he brought him,
To be the shepherd of Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.
So he was their shepherd according to the integrity of his heart,
And guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.
(Psa. 78. 71, 72.)

And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. (Matt. 4. 18, 19.)

And he goeth up into the mountain, and calleth unto him whom he himself would; and they went unto him. And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons. (Mark 3. 13–15.)

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many? (John 6. 8, 9.)

Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come. . . . And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name. (Luke 10. 1, 17.)

CHAPTER XIII

THE COUNTRY CHURCH DISCOVERING AND TRAINING LEADERSHIP

Among both ministers and laymen we hear everywhere the statement: "There are no leaders in our church. Our young people of promise are away at college. The brightest and best have moved from the community. We have no Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, club work, or vacation Bible school, because there is no one able to oversee them. We cannot get satisfactory Sunday-school teachers." Sometimes the minister adds: "You see, my wife and I simply cannot do everything ourselves."

Latent Leadership

This lament overlooks two important considerations. First, there is an undeveloped leadership in every community, and second, the improvement of the community can come only by development from within itself.

During the World War every community was surprised at the number of workers within its own boundaries who did efficient and splendid service for war purposes. In the sale of war bonds impetus was given and some direction of effort suggested by State and national workers, but the plans were furthered and the work was done by home folks. Under the stress of a great challenge, unrealized and amazing ability for leadership was discovered within the community. It was there all the time but had lain dormant and unknown. It is not the lack of talent and capacity which threatens the church in any community. The factors which threaten are the lack of vision to see the possible achievements if talent is aroused, and the lack of a plan and program of training whereby this talent can be made effective.

Outside workers cannot be imported in sufficient numbers to solve any community problem. The work must be done by the local group, although inspiration and

suggestion may come from the outside. The minister and his wife are not so valuable for the work they may themselves do as for the direction which they should give to the work of others. The church must learn to trust its own membership and constituency in the same way that the government trusted community workers in selling war bonds. One pastor conducted an educational service which is a fine example of using potential leadership in the parish. He was earnestly seeking to increase the number of high-school seniors who would plan for college. He secured two persons who had been out of college about fifteen years to speak upon the subject, "Why I Am Glad I Went to College." Two young people still in college spoke on "Why I Am Glad I Am in College." Two high-school seniors told, "Why I Am Planning to Go to College."

Where America's Leaders Come From

One of the questions in rural sociology which is receiving a great deal of attention relates to the source of leadership. Have more leaders been born and reared in the country or in the city? This is an important question and it is being ably discussed. Perhaps one of the most valuable and informing brief discussions is to be found in a book by Professor Gillette.[1] Country people may feel happy and hopeful over certain conclusions which are there brought out. One is happily surprised that so much leadership has been developed where educational facilities and the more active influence of the cultural arts have been so largely denied. This may be due in part to the fact noted in Chapter II of this book, that the country offers better opportunities for youth to form the habits of work, thrift, initiative, and others of creative value.

A good many facts are stated which should encourage religious and social work in the country. "Newell Dwight Hillis states that ninety-five per cent of the leading citizens of one of our most important Eastern cities were brought up on the farm. A few years ago a study was made of the birthplace of one hundred of the most reputable and successful business and professional men of Chicago,

[1] *Rural Sociology*, chap. xxiv. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

with the result that eighty-five per cent of them were found to have been farm or village bred."[2] A few years ago a university enrolling about twelve hundred students, situated in a Western city of one hundred thousand population, disclosed the fact that ninety-five per cent of these students had been born on the farm. On the other hand, at a recent summer session in Garrett Biblical Institute, from an enrollment of more than one hundred and fifty preparing for the ministry only one was from a city of the first class. Indeed, a noted Chicago church in commemorating its twenty-fifth anniversary could not point to a single minister who had been sent from its membership in that quarter of a century of its history.

The Example of One Rural County

"Litchfield County is a group of hills and vales in northeastern Connecticut. It is not much larger than the ranch of many a cattle king in New Mexico or Texas, for it is only thirty-three miles long and twenty-seven miles wide; but the influence for good which has radiated from that little Greece is immeasurable. The county furnished the American Revolution with men like Ethan Allen and Seth Warner, gave to the Civil War movement Harriet Beecher Stowe and John Brown; gave many colleges their presidents, among them Finney to Oberlin, Day to Yale, Babcock to Colby, and Stirtevant to Illinois. It produced Professors N. W. Taylor for Yale, Ebenezer P. Porter for Andover, and William Thompson for Hartford. It gave the American pulpit Horace Bushnell, Henry Ward Beecher, John Pierpont, and numerous others of a nation-wide fame. The first law school in America was there opened and it sent out many of the most prominent statesmen and lawyers of the last century. In 1831 the vice-president of the United States and one eighth of the United States senators were either born or educated in that county, and in 1850 one seventh of all the senators had been educated within its confines.

"In the parsonage at Torringford, in this same Litchfield County, Samuel J. Mills was born. He was the

[2] Gillette, *Rural Sociology*, p. 521. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

central figure in the famous Haystack Prayer Meeting, and the spot in a field on his father's farm where young Mills dedicated his life to God and to the cause of foreign missions, has been called 'the birthplace of American foreign missions.' It was Mills who started the influence which led to the formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and who enlisted men like Adoniram Judson in the cause. Volumes could not adequately tell the story of the gracious influences which have reached the world from these Litchfield County hillsides."[3]

What Litchfield has done every community can hope to do. By looking to the future every community can establish its goals and build its ideals. It should ever aim toward the development of its own human resources. The ideal agriculturist, the ideal minister, the ideal lawyer, the ideal scientist, and the ideal educator should be clearly defined, and all callings essential to the best of national and international civilization should be held before the young people of the community as possible to them.

The Example of Jesus

All of Jesus' twelve apostles excepting Judas were chosen from the larger community about Nazareth and Capernaum and the territory around the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee. Not one was selected from the metropolitan cities of that day. Jesus never visited nor preached in Athens, he never set foot in the eternal city of Rome, he was only an infrequent visitor to the Palestinian metropolis of Jerusalem. His leadership training work was done within the boundaries of what may be termed his own community. It was from here that he chose and sent out the seventy. From here he selected and trained the twelve.

Without intending any invidious comparison it must be noted that these twelve were not enlisted at an altar call or by a mass movement. Jesus held many gatherings at the lakeside, but no evidence is found of any method of selecting leaders which was at all like a modern Epworth

[3] *College Inaugural Address*, by Bishop Nicholson.

League Institute with its wholesale appeals for enlistment. The value of this method to-day is not questioned. We are simply indicating that in the local parish and community work we can best follow the method of Jesus, which was to interest and call individually and personally his working force. One by one Jesus beckoned and challenged James, Nathanael, Peter, John, and the others of his chosen group. They were called from the labors customary in the social order of his day. A comparable picture which the church must see to-day is its ministry and leadership, its John and James and Nathanael, called from corn fields, from mining villages, and from threshing crews.

A careful study of Jesus' example and method leads one to believe that he could have selected his apostolic group from any community. Certainly the church can do more than it has done in every local field. Its most important task is the personal calling out of its individual and latent talent, thus setting in motion those forces which above all will produce Christian leadership for the solution of its own problems and also of those beyond its confines.

The Consecration of Youth

"Whenever one has said in his heart of some sodden Littleton, 'Here at least it will not work,' his doubts have been given the lie by some man of courage who tried and made it work. Those who have tried longest and most devotedly are sure that the surface phenomena of our community life are underlaid with vitalities waiting to be released. There is strength in the subsoil of common life. The general revival of civic life waits only upon efficiently organized and universalized presentation of the ideal to the communities of America.

"There is no more certain social force than the idealistic hunger of each new generation of young men and women. Youth is synonymous with the power of a glowing vision. It has no power not to respond. Here is something to count on, to tie to. 'Its going forth is sure as the morning.' Like the widow's cruse of oil, it does not fail. Nothing which pertains to man is more beautiful or dramatic than

the great procession of young lives, a fair proportion of whom are always eager to devote themselves to altruistic adventure if the call comes timely and clear. There is no more marked nor heartening aspect of American civilization than this. The only question is of the specific direction of these self-devoted lives. Of them the little town furnished a disproportionate share. They have gone forth mostly to far fields, to the social service of the city, to foreign missions. To such this book would like to believe that it presents a direct challenge and appeal. Home is the nearest spot of missionary ground. The little town is a field for altruistic service of thrilling importance. Here stands greatness humbly clad; here patriotic labor is involved with charm; here deep social processes are bound up with intimate personal contacts; here especially the high fortunes of the open country are to be centered and inspired; here lies the pleasant middle ground through which, if one will have it so, the Garden of Eden merges into the City of God."[4]

Calling Out Talent

The first requisite for calling out the talent of any community is faith—faith to believe that it is there—a faith which is to be compared with that of Columbus or any explorer who ventured upon the seas and walked the waste places of the earth.

Lodges have their high potentates and most of them have a dozen chief officers in each local organization. Many of the officials memorize material that in quantity far surpasses the preacher's memorization of the Bible. The farm bureau in its organization has found cooperators and other officers within the community. Even a flock of geese soon develop a V shape in their flight, indicating the choice of one leader from their group. When that leader is shot down, another is selected. Capacity and talent are in every community; it differs in both quantity and quality, but all have some measure. Almost always there are one or more high-school graduates, and many communities have a few college graduates. The church dare not stand aloof

[4] H. P. Douglas, *The Little Town*, pp. 243, 244. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

and criticize the inactivity of this group until it has challenged them to worth-while tasks.

Too often a church has complained that young people coming home from college do not fit into its program. The question needs to be asked whether the church is trying to enlarge its program in order that these young people may fit into it. College life is a highly developed, highly organized, and highly enthusiastic section of society. A college student accustomed to enthusiasm, to class loyalty, and to college spirit very frequently finds his home church and its program decidedly dull. The challenge is not so much for him to fit into a dull program as it is for the church to construct a program which will naturally enlist his loyalty and effort.

Second only to faith is the willingness to cultivate the talent of individuals and to expend training on small groups. Out of a half dozen or more Sunday-school teacher training classes the author's most valuable experience was that with a class of three, a dozen years ago in a little New England village. After fruitless appeal and urging from the pulpit for enrollment, a training class was finally organized by selecting and personally inviting three men of the community to the study. These three men met with the pastor for twenty-two successive Monday nights. They met in turn in the homes of the four. Within eighteen months of the time this training class was begun one of the group was made Sunday-school superintendent, a post which he has efficiently filled for more than a decade. The second, a young father, then only recently converted, has made a valuable Sunday-school worker and teacher. The third, a young man of seventeen years, has been lost to church leadership. While this loss is to be regretted, it is fair to say that this teacher-training class was sixty-six and two thirds per cent efficient. And no other class in the author's experience has produced such valuable spiritual relationships as this study carried on by four friends together.

What the Country Church Must Demand

The country church must demand an efficient leadership in the ministry. Theological schools are under obli-

gation to train men for the task to which they are sent. The country church must demand such assistance in the reorganization of church polity and geography as will give longer pastorates and larger fields of service. The notion which prevails in the ministry is that the city is the place to end one's career. In the declining years of life men retire rather than be placed in rural work. The accepted ideal has been that recognition of success in Christian work occurs in connection with a minister's rapid move to a better appointment. The successful promotion of parish life is thought of only as an indication of one's ability to go higher—elsewhere. Whether this is inevitable can be proved only when the whole church has endeavored to dignify and elevate the country as well as the city ministry. The entire task confronting the country church appears staggering. The one thing more baffling than this task, however, is the question, what will be the outcome of human effort if the task is not attempted? Science is revealing a life and organization which extend beyond even the reach of an earlier imagination. The church is called upon to interpret its meaning. It is as though the church were called upon to create a new spiritual order because it is in the midst of a physical order which is new.

The natural unit for beginning all readjustment is the community. The new social order must come from the local neighborhood up and not from political treaties down. History shows that national decay and international turmoil have always begun at the points of the concentration of wealth and the congestion of population. Stability and growth have been inaugurated where populations were scattered and resources undeveloped. The country church stands to-day among the people who still live amid such conditions of stability and growth. Around her are people who are silent but strong, unchallenged but capable, undemonstrative, but deeply spiritual. Around her are youth who are backward but clean, uncouth but teachable, unaroused but ready for greater things. Let the country church arouse, challenge, and direct the unfolding of this life which is about her and her work shall be done, her task completed.

Books for Reference

Social Organization, C. H. Cooley.
The Challenge of the Country, G. W. Fiske.
The Executive and His Control of Men, E. B. Gowin.

For Discussion

1. To what extent should the pastor and his wife work within the church and its organization?
2. Get complete lists of those from this church who helped on the many committees for service work during the World War.
3. Name the leading officials of farm bureau, lodges, school board, commercial club, and other community organizations. Do they have leadership ability? What do they do or fail to do which justifies your answer?
4. Who have gone out from this community into the ministry? into education? into other forms of service?
5. How many high-school graduates are there in this community? How many college graduates? Who are they?
6. What responsibility for service does high school or college graduation carry?
7. Name some goals for this community which would be worthy the record of Litchfield county.
8. Prove that "Home is the nearest spot of mission ground."
9. How can we aid in establishing a new ideal for the country ministry?

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